

STARS AND STRIPES[®]

Plenty of fight left in Ja Rule

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PHIL MICKELSON

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FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 26, 2004

'War doesn't discriminate. Everybody gets hurt.'

A battle to save Fallujah wounded

BY RON JENSEN
Stars and Stripes

BALAD AIR BASE, Iraq

There was a drumbeat. A battle was looming. Negotiations with the insurgents in Fallujah were

failing. Coalition troops were massing. Would the offensive kick off? If so, when? What would it be like?

The staff at the Air Force Theater Hospital watched this. They listened to this. They waited.

"Suddenly," said Dr. (Col.) Ted Parsons, deputy commander of the hospital, "the helicopters started dropping out of the sky."

The helicopters would come for days, day and night, ferrying wounded from the battle-

field, filling the operating rooms and the beds of the hospital with human carnage — American soldiers and Marines, Iraqi National Guard and police, enemy combatants and civilians.

SEE HOSPITAL ON PAGE 5

Bittersweet Thanksgiving

Troops in Iraq missing home, but not on an empty stomach

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PHOTOS BY RON JENSEN/Stars and Stripes

Above: Three soldiers from the 369th Transportation Company, from left, 1st Sgt. David Dibble, Spc. David Kingsland and Staff Sgt. Ken Colson, toast the holiday Thursday at a dining facility at Logistics Support Area Anaconda, Iraq. Thanksgiving dinner was served in dining facilities across Iraq. Right: Command Sgt. Maj. Ed Whittington of the 172nd Corps Support Group serves up a Thanksgiving meal for a soldier at LSA Anaconda.



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News Tracker ... What's new with old news

States

Martha Stewart appeal: The government urged a federal appeals court in New York to uphold the conviction of Martha Stewart, arguing that "overwhelming evidence" supported the guilty verdict against the celebrity homemaker.



Stewart

Stewart, serving a five-month sentence at a West Virginia prison, had argued to the 2nd U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals that prosecutors improperly suggested at her trial that she was charged with insider trading.

The appeals court is unlikely to hear oral arguments in the case until early next year and probably will not rule on the appeal before Stewart leaves prison.

Heart attack killed soldier's mom: A woman who collapsed and died hours after viewing the body of her son killed while serving in Iraq suffered a heart attack, Arizona authorities said.

Karen Unruh-Wahrer, 45, had atherosclerotic cardiovascular disease, more commonly known as hardening of the arteries, which led her Oct. 2 heart attack, said Dr. Bruce Parks, Pima County's chief medical examiner.

Unruh-Wahrer was said to be inconsolable after the death of her 25-year-old son, Army Spc. Robert Oliver Unruh, who was killed Sept. 25 by enemy fire near Baghdad.

Imposter sentenced: A man who posed as a gynecologist after setting up an office in a self-storage complex was sentenced to four years in prison after pleading guilty to practicing medicine without a license.

The charges stemmed from an undercover investigation that began after authorities in Dallas saw an ad in a weekly newspaper offering free medical care.

Thomas P. Remo, 50, of Ovilla, wore a scrub shirt and had medical equipment in the makeshift exam room, a small kitchen in the storage facility office where he worked, authorities said.

FDA scientist faces pressure: Dr. David J. Graham, the Food and Drug Administration scientist who publicly criticized the agency's approach to drug safety during a congressional hearing last week, said Wednesday that he was facing pressure to transfer to a different job in the FDA — a move that he said was in retaliation for his remarks.

Graham was the star witness at a Nov. 18 Senate hearing into the prescription painkiller Vioxx. Its manufacturer, Merck & Co., pulled the drug from the market after research findings confirmed an increased risk of heart attack among patients taking the medication.

Graham testified that the FDA ignored his warnings about the drug and attempted to suppress the results of his investigations.

Hinckley request denied: The man who shot President Reagan may continue taking short, overnight trips away from a mental hospital, but a federal judge says John Hinckley Jr. is not ready for longer visits yet.

U.S. District Judge Paul L. Friedman on Wednesday denied Hinckley's request to spend four nights at a time, every two weeks, visiting his parents at their home in Washington, Va. Friedman said he first wanted doctors



U.N. hostages released: Philippine President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo, right, greets freed Filipino hostage Angelito Nayan at the Malacanang palace in Manila on Thursday. The release this week of Nayan and two other U.N. workers who were kidnapped in Kabul is shrouded in mystery, the freed hostages have made no comment about how they were set free or who snatched them, and Afghan officials insist they did not agree to any concession.

sort out whether Hinckley has unresolved feelings toward a former girlfriend.

Sniper shootings: Sniper mastermind John Allen Muhammad and his teenage accomplice Lee Boyd Malvo will not face charges for a slaying in Washington state months before they went on their rampage in and around the nation's capital, prosecutors said Wednesday.

Prosecutor Jerry Costello said there was little point in putting on an expensive trial in Tacoma for the February 2002 shooting death of Keenya Cook since the pair already face the death penalty or life in prison in Virginia.

World

World Food Program suspended: The World Food Program has suspended its operations in most of the Sudanese state of North Darfur and relocated its staff to the capital due to renewed clashes between rebels and government forces, the U.N. agency said Thursday.

The move leaves 300,000 people displaced by the fighting without access to WFP food aid, the agency said in a statement.

On Monday, 45 humanitarian aid workers who fled the fighting were rescued by African Union troops.

Israel separation barrier construction: Israel should stop building its West Bank separation barrier if Palestinian militants halt attacks, Israel's president was quoted as saying Thursday, in the most high-profile criticism yet of the contentious project.

The separation barrier and the Gaza withdrawal are part of Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon's so-called "unilateral disengagement" from the Palestinians. The barrier would serve as a temporary frontier until a final peace deal is negotiated.

Mark Thatcher's trial postponed: A South African court on Thursday postponed Sir Mark Thatcher's trial for allegedly helping finance a foiled coup attempt in oil-rich Equatorial Guinea until April 8 for further investigation.

Thatcher, the 51-year-old son of former British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher, was not asked to plead.

Magistrate Awie Kotze granted the delay at the request of prosecutors. He also extended Thatcher's bail conditions, which require that he remain in the Cape Town area and report daily to police.

Thatcher, who has lived in South Africa since 1995, was arrested at his suburban Cape Town home on August 25 and charged with violating this country's anti-mercenary laws. He also faces charges in Equatorial Guinea.

Ethiopia, Eritrea border dispute: Prime Minister Meles Zenawi told parliament Thursday that Ethiopia has decided to accept "in principle" a disputed ruling on its border with Eritrea made as part of a peace deal four years ago.

Ethiopia had until now refused to respect the April 2002 ruling by the Eritrea-Ethiopia Boundary Commission, part of the Permanent Court of Arbitration based in The Hague, Netherlands.

The government will start dialogue immediately with Eritrea "with a view to implementing the decision of the Eritrea-Ethiopia Boundary Commission in a manner consistent with the promotion of sustainable peace and brotherly ties between the two peoples," Meles said.

Turkey torture troubles: It seemed an obvious case of police brutality: a young man beaten senseless by officers in an argument over littering.

Yet it's the injured party, Kemal Yadirilim, who has found himself in the dock, facing charges of disobedience, verbal abuse and threatening behavior.

Under intense pressure from the European Union, Turkey has carried out dramatic rights reforms in recent years. But cases like that of Yadirilim indicate the country has a long way to go before satisfying the prosperous bloc, which Turkey desperately wants to join.

While incidents of torture, the violation for which Turkey is most notorious, have fallen sharply, reports of police abuse and failure to enforce reforms laws remain common.

Business

Disney security guards: Walt Disney World's security guards overwhelmingly rejected a new three-year labor contract, ignoring a recommendation from their union leaders.

Members of the Security, Police, and Fire Professionals of America Local 603 voted down the agreement 296-26 late Wednesday.

Negotiations are to resume next week.

Stories and photos from wire services

Al-Zarqawi lieutenant captured in Mosul

American civilian working with embassy killed outside Green Zone

BY SAMEER N. YACOB

The Associated Press

BAGHDAD — A lieutenant of Iraq's most feared terrorist leader, Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, was captured a few days ago in Mosul, and Iraqi troops searching suspected terrorist hideouts in Fallujah discovered a laboratory with manuals on manufacturing explosives and toxins — including anthrax, Iraq's national security adviser said Thursday.

Also, the U.S. military said it discovered the "largest weapons cache to date in the city of Fallujah." The weapons — including anti-tank mines and a mobile bomb-making lab — were found inside a mosque used by an insurgent leader. Troops also found documents detailing hostile interrogations, the military said.

The U.S. Embassy said Thursday that an American civilian working with the embassy was killed during an attack outside the Green Zone. In Washington, U.S. Secretary of State Colin Powell identified the man as James Mollen, a State Department education specialist who served as a consultant to Iraq's minister of education and the minister of higher education.

Spokesman Pete Mitchell said Mollen was traveling in a vehicle outside the protected Green Zone, which houses the U.S. and Iraqi leadership, when he came under gunfire Wednesday afternoon.

Five Arab foreign fighters who were sent from Fallujah were arrested near the southern city of Basra, where they were planning to attack coalition bases and police stations, authorities said.

National security adviser James Dawoud identified al-Zar-

qawi's alleged lieutenant as Abu Saeed, but he gave no further details.

Insurgents rose up this month in Mosul, Iraq's third-largest city, in support of rebels in Fallujah, who were routed by U.S. and Iraqi forces in an offensive that began Nov. 8. U.S. and Iraqi authorities managed to regain control of Mosul after the entire 5,000-member police force disintegrated.

Al-Zarqawi, whose al-Qaida-linked group has been responsible for numerous car bombings and beheadings of foreign hostages, including three Americans and a Briton, was believed headquartered in Fallujah. But the Jordanian-born extremist managed to escape the siege.

The United States has offered a \$25 million reward for al-Zarqawi's capture — the same amount being offered for Osama bin Laden and his deputy, Ayman al-Zawahiri.

In Fallujah, Iraqi forces uncovered a lab in the southwestern district of the city, where pockets of insurgents are still holding out following the assault.

"We also found in the laboratory manuals and instructions spelling out procedures for making explosives," Dawoud said.

Dawoud showed pictures of a shelf containing what he said were various chemicals.

Earlier, the U.S. military said it had uncovered the "largest arms cache yet inside the mosque of an insurgent leader in Fallujah. Troops found small arms, artillery shells, heavy machine guns, and anti-tank mines Wednesday inside the Saad Abi Bin Waqas Mosque in central Fallujah where Sunni rebel leader and imam Abdullah al-Janabi often spoke, the U.S. military said in a statement.



A firefighter hoses down a burning Iraqi police car after it came under attack from unknown gunmen in western Baghdad on Thursday. Witnesses said three police officers were wounded in the attack.

U.S. Marine officers say they so far have found enough weapons in Fallujah to refuel a nationwide rebellion.

Elsewhere in the mosque compound, troops also found what may be a mobile bomb-making factory housed in a truck, as well as mortar systems, rocket-propelled grenades, launchers, recoilless rifles and parts of surface-to-air weapons systems, the statement said.

The troops also found "documents that detailed insurgent interrogations of recent kidnap victims," the statement said.

U.S. and Iraqi troops continue to sweep the city amid sporadic gun battles with rebel holdouts.

Meanwhile, Basra Police Chief Brig. Mohammed Khazim said the

five men were stopped late Wednesday at a checkpoint in Qurnah, about 35 miles north of Basra, and "personal weapons" were found in their four-wheel-drive vehicle.

Defense Minister Hazem Shaalan said earlier this week that about 60 Arab fighters have been arrested during the Fallujah assault.

Two of the captured fighters were identified as being from Saudi Arabia, two from Tunisia and one from Libya.

Meanwhile, an explosion hit a domestic pipeline Thursday that runs from northern Kirkuk to the Basra refinery, oil officials said. Saboteurs also attacked two oil wells near the Himreen Mountains, 75 miles south of Kirkuk, but the oil continued flowing, the official said.

U.S. deaths in Iraq

The Associated Press

As of Wednesday, at least 1,230 members of the U.S. military have died since the beginning of the Iraq war in March 2003, according to an Associated Press count. At least 961 died as a result of hostile action, the Defense Department said.

The figures include three military civilians.

The British military has reported 74 deaths; Italy, 19; Poland, 13; Spain, 11; Ukraine, nine; Bulgaria, seven; Slovakia, three; Estonia, Thailand and the Netherlands, two each; and Denmark, El Salvador, Hungary and Latvia have reported one death each.

Since May 1, 2003, when President Bush declared that major combat operations in Iraq had ended, 1,092 U.S. military members have died, according to AP's count. That includes at least 852 deaths resulting from hostile action, according to the military's numbers.

The latest deaths reported by the military:

■ No new deaths reported.

The latest identifications reported by the military:

■ Army Spc. David L. Rountree, 22, West Seneca, N.Y.; killed Saturday in a grenade attack on his vehicle in Baghdad. ■ Army Capt. Joseph M. Novak, 27, Philadelphia, killed Nov. 18 when an explosive detonated near his vehicle in Fallujah, Iraq; assigned to the 312th Military Intelligence Battalion, Cavalry Division, Fort Hood, Texas.

Child leads GIs to bomb

TIKRIT, Iraq — An Iraqi youngster in Samarra on Monday led a 1st Infantry Division patrol to a homemade bomb in an alley, allowing it to be defused before it exploded, according to a division news release.

The release said the soldiers from Task Force 1-26 had been distributing flyers to residents of the neighborhood for about 10 minutes when the boy walked up to them and told them about the bomb.

He led them to an alley, where they found a 155mm artillery round and a 120mm mortar round wired together as a bomb. An Army explosive ordnance detachment team then safely removed it, the release said.

Task Force 1-26 is made up mostly of soldiers from the 1st Battalion, 26th Infantry Regiment based in Schweinfurt, Germany, as well as several National Guard detachments who have been patrolling the Samarra area since March.

From staff reports

Fort Hood GI charged with killing Iraqi citizen

BY T.A. BADGER

The Associated Press

A U.S. soldier stationed at Fort Hood, Texas, was arrested and jailed Wednesday on a murder charge in the death of an Iraqi civilian in January.

Staff Sgt. Shane West, 31, of El Toro, Calif., is accused of killing the Iraqi man while serving with the 3rd Brigade Combat Team out of Fort Carson, Colo.

He also is charged with obstruction of justice for allegedly trying to get his comrades to lie about what happened to Naser Ismail after the Iraqi man was taken into custody in Balad on Jan. 3.

West is one of a number of Fort Carson-based soldiers charged with crimes in Iraq.

Two other members of the 3rd Brigade Combat Team face trial for murder in the drowning of an Iraqi man who's soldier reportedly pushed off a bridge into the Tigris River in January.

Lt. Col. Jonathan Withington, chief spokesman for the 4th Infantry Division at Fort Hood, said charges were filed against West within days after another soldier came forward to report the alleged incident.

"It happened almost a year ago, but the evidence just emerged and just became known to the division," Withington said. "The command immediately brought in [Army criminal investigators] and we're going to get to the bottom of it."

Withington said Ismail was taken into custody by West's unit during a building-by-building search in Balad.

He would not say how Ismail died or whether charges against other soldiers were expected.

"It is an open and active investigation," Withington said.

"Currently we're focused on this specific soldier in this specific incident. Anything else would be speculation on my part."

West, who has been in the Army for nearly 14 years, is currently assigned to the 4th Infantry's Headquarters and Headquarters Company.

He was being held Wednesday at the Bell County jail in Belton because Fort Hood does not have its own lockup.

Withington said a hearing will be held within a week to determine whether West will be released or remain confined until his trial. No trial date has yet been set.

If convicted of murder, West could be sentenced to life in prison without possibility of parole and dishonorable discharge.

The obstruction of justice charge carries a maximum penalty of five years confinement, along with dishonorable discharge.

At least four other Fort Carson soldiers face charges for alleged crimes in Iraq.

Sgt. 1st Class Tracy Perkins, 33, is scheduled for trial at Fort Hood next month on charges of manslaughter, conspiracy, assault and lying to investigators stemming from the alleged drowning of an Iraqi civilian in Samarra.

Perkins and 1st Lt. Jack Seibert, both part of the 3rd Brigade Strike Team, are accused of pushing two Iraqis off a bridge into the Tigris River as punishment for violating curfew. Perkins is also charged with assault for a similar incident near Balad in December.

Saville, a 24-year-old West Point graduate, will be tried in January.

Fort Carson also is home to the 3rd Armored Cavalry Regiment, two of whose troops were charged in October with "unauthorized use of force against individuals" for a reported incident near Ar Rutbah between May and July.

Thanksgiving in Iraq; home in their dreams



RON JENSEN/Stars and Stripes

Sgt. Brad Nix of the 644th Transportation Company grabs a Thanksgiving dinner Thursday at Logistics Support Area Anaconda, Iraq. Troops across the country had a chance to enjoy a traditional turkey dinner.

There's plenty to eat and drink, but the dinner isn't quite the same as Mom's home cooking

BY RON JENSEN

Stars and Stripes

LOGISTICS SUPPORT AREA
ANACONDA, IRAQ

Thanksgiving. Give thanks.

Thanksgiving in Iraq. Hey, thanks. Thanks a lot.

"It kind of stinks," said Pvt. 1st Class Clifton Thompson, a mechanic with 1st Brigade, 25th Base Support Battalion.

He'd rather be back home in Olympia, Wash. He'd be deer hunting with his father. Then he'd eat a big meal. Then he'd watch football. Then he'd sleep.

Instead, he's in a chow line. In Iraq. At LSA Anaconda's largest dining facility.

Thanksgiving. Give thanks.

"It's like another duty day," said Tech Sgt. Tim Dorman of the 732nd Expeditionary Logistics Readiness Squadron.

He, too, is in line. The sun is shining on the dust. He's not home in Virginia. They're smoking a turkey there. He'd help eat it. Watch football. Take a nap. Get up. And eat dessert. Again.

The dining facility looks nice. Some big colorful cakes declare in icing "Happy Thanksgiving." There's a house made of crackers. Colorful bunting. In autumn colors. Brown and orange.

It's festive. It's Thanksgiving-like. They piled it. KBR brought 200,000 pounds of turkey, 45,000 pounds of stuffing and 25 tons of mashed potatoes to Iraq. Thanksgiving in Iraq.

"Right now, my family's getting together at my brother's house. He lives in Fort Walton, Fla.," said Master Sgt. Philip Gaylor, 732nd Expeditionary Mission Support Group.

He's not there. He's in Iraq.

Sgt. Jimmy Billingsley is a driver with the 1171st Transportation Company with the Tennessee National Guard. He's dealing with it by playing mind games.

"We make the best out of it," he said. "We know it's Thanksgiving. So in our minds, we make it Thanksgiving."

Football later. Much later. The first game is at 9 p.m. in Iraq, long after the pumpkin pie. There were 73,750 pies in theater.

Back home in Humboldt, Tenn., Sgt. Jerry Cox, also of the 1171st, would "eat till you fall down."

He might do that here. There're 5,000 hams to be eaten, too.

That's one thing, then, he won't miss out on: The food.

"It just seems like another day in Iraq," he said.

The dining facilities held a competition. Which one would be best decorated for the holiday. Ice sculptures. Big tall cakes of several layers. Autumn colors.

Thanksgiving, you know.

The troops ate the turkey and the ham and the cranberry sauce — 25,000 pounds of cranberry sauce is in the country.

They dug into the pumpkin pie and the eggnog. Iraq was floating in 8,750 gallons of eggnog. Alcohol-free eggnog, of course.

It was a special day. A thankful day. Plenty of food. It was good, too.

"I'd be at my mother's house right now (in Tennessee)," said Sgt. Christie Cosola of the 1171st. "That's where they're at. The whole family gets together."

Not the whole family. She's in Iraq. First in line, actually. Just happened that way.

"Like every other day around here," she said. "I'm going home soon. That's what I'm thinking about."

Something to be thankful about. It's Thanksgiving in Iraq.

E-mail Ron Jensen at: jensenr@mailstripes.osd.mil

Back home, soldiers find solace in one another

BY JESSE HAMILTON

The Hartford Courant

The two loners talk almost every day.

Five minutes on the phone. What are you doing? Nothing special. How about you? Most times, Joe Yorski doesn't tell Dan Lawler how much it hurts to have watched his old life — his pre-Iraq life — come apart, his marriage over, his family split in two.

And Lawler does not always mention the way he can close his eyes sometimes and feel like he's back in Baghdad, as if a mortar shell might fall at any second to shatter his peace.

There's no reason to dwell on these things with each other. Both already know. Even when it's not mentioned, their year in Iraq is with them, living in the pauses in conversation, pushing them closer together.

Lawler isn't sure why he picks up the phone in his New Jersey office and dials Yorski at the New Britain Police Department in New Britain, Conn. He just can't help wondering what his platoon

mate from the 143rd Military Police Company might be doing. So he calls. And it doesn't matter what they talk about. It's enough that they are connected again.

Both need that contact, because the war came home with them. Not roadside bombs and gunfire, but different dangers, the kind of trouble that rings familiar to veterans of any war.

So as they try again to live normal lives, the loners find themselves doing what they're used to: watching each other's back.

Dodging bombs in Iraq

On Oct. 26, 2003, Sgt. 1st Class Dan Lawler was sitting in a Humvee in front of a Baghdad police station when the night air flashed with fire and shards of metal. The first detonations left his ears buzzing, but they were not loud enough to drown out the screaming.

A mortar shell had hit the Humvee next to his. Lawler and others from the 143rd moved toward the screams. Three soldiers from another group, the 527th MP, had been hit. Two were in desperate

shape, their legs tangles of meat and blood. Lawler found the third, her helmeted head slumped against the Humvee steering wheel. Pfc. Rachel Bosveld was unconscious but alive.

Lawler and another soldier cut Bosveld from her seat belt and carried the 19-year-old between them toward the station, stopping only when a mortar explosion forced Lawler to his knees.

"She stopped breathing," Lawler shouted in the crowded room.

The CPR didn't work. It couldn't. A small piece of shrapnel had hit a spot not protected by her body armor. It punched through her torso, burning a trail through her insides that no medic could fix. Rachel Bosveld, a home-sick teen barely out of high school, was on her way back home.

Trouble at home

The argument between Yorski and his wife, Denise, was the kind nobody wins. Yorski's head was full of the falling towers of 9/11 and a friend he lost inside. He wanted to go back to the Connecti-

cut National Guard's 143rd MPs, the unit with which he'd done the 1991 Gulf War. He wanted to serve his country in something other than a New Britain police uniform.

Denise argued that he'd done his service. The Army didn't need him.

For the 34-year-old Yorski, though, having a family was reason enough to serve, to want to defend his country. I have to put my foot down, he told himself. I have to do this.

He signed up to be Staff Sgt. Joe Yorski again. But he didn't expect his unit to be called up so quickly. The 143rd was among several in Connecticut that would get a look inside another Middle East war.

As the months passed, he didn't receive cards or letters or the care packages that other soldiers received. Something was wrong at home. He talked to his wife from a phone bank in downtown Baghdad while his squad guarded the street outside. He applied for emergency leave, but it was denied. He waited for a regular R&R and was among the first to receive one.

Yorski flew home for the two-week leave. A friend gave him a ride to his house. When he got there, his wife called the police. Her complaint: He'd shown up unannounced. He learned his wife was seeing another man and had decided to serve him with divorce papers. He had a handful of days, his first in the house they had built, to get reacquainted with his kids and get a lawyer.

The Army told him he didn't have to go back to Iraq. No. I have a squad, a bunch of young kids, Yorski told himself. I still have a job to do.

So he went back to Baghdad and to 3rd Platoon. The platoon was run by Lawler. Yorski had a growing friendship with the platoon sergeant who, when he wasn't snapping orders or chewing his soldiers out, reminded Yorski he had a family in Iraq that needed him, too. Lawler pushed Yorski right back into his duties. The two men bunked 5 feet from each other. In their scant off hours, they would talk about family life and missing their children.

For Yorski, "Dan was a big help."

Hospital: Fallujah wounded put AF docs to test

HOSPITAL, FROM PAGE 1

"War doesn't discriminate. Everybody gets hurt," said Dr. (Lt. Col.) Jim Quinn, hospital chief of staff.

They came in an endless chain, carried from the helicopter pad nearby, through the swinging plywood door of the emergency room and into the operating rooms. Again and again.

"We pretty much did not have an operating room empty for eight days. We have three operating rooms," said Dr. (Lt. Col.) Dan Jenkins, trauma medical director. "I stopped looking at my watch. I would say most guys had no idea what day it was."

Doctors and surgeons catnapped when they could — an hour here, an hour there. Some medical staff would break away for four hours of uninterrupted sleep and then go back to 24 hours of uninterrupted work.

"The first day or two was a lot of adrenalin," said Capt. Henry LeBlanc, nurse manager of the emergency room.

The patient load numbered in the hundreds. The wounds were brutal. Limbs torn away. Bodies shredded by bits of fast-flying metal and sharp shards of glass. Wounds that refused to stop bleeding.

Emergency room nurse Capt. Manuel Martinez, a neo-natal intensive care unit nurse back at Wilford Hall Air Force Medical Center in San Antonio, Texas, was shaken by what he saw two weeks ago.

"I don't think anything can prepare you for what we do here," he said.

But there is a method for measuring the success of the hospital staff's efforts, a way to quanti-

fy the effectiveness of choking back emotion and focusing on the job.

People died at the hospital, but only those who arrived with mortal brain injuries perished. No medical procedure or effort could have saved them, doctors said. But they were the only ones.

"Of the other hundreds of casualties that we operated on," Jenkins said, "not a single patient died."

First taste of battlefield

For nearly every person on the staff — surgeon, nurse, x-ray technician, pharmacist, what-have-you — this was their first taste of combat medicine.

Most of them are from Wilford Hall at Lackland Air Force Base, the service's largest hospital. San Antonio is a big city with its share of violent crime, auto accidents and natural disasters.

"Coming here and taking care of the (improvised explosive device), mortar, grenade blast injury patients really required a small amount of on-the-job training," said Jenkins, who for eight years has taught surgeons to prepare for war. "We didn't know what it was like. We knew what it was supposed to be like."

The staff was making a bit of history just by showing up. This is the first time since the Vietnam war the Air Force has operated a hospital like this in a war zone. That's not to say Air Force docs and nurses haven't been near the front in the last 30 years, but they haven't had a presence like this one.

"It's not as groundbreaking as it might appear," said Quinn. "Doing something of this size and scope is what's unique."



PHOTOS BY RON JENSEN/Stars and Stripes

Capt. Debra Nichols, a nurse at the Air Force Theater Hospital at Balad Air Base, Iraq, prepares a post-surgery patient for movement. The hospital treated hundreds of patients during a surge of wounded from the recent fighting in Fallujah.

An Air Force Theater Hospital is defined as having 85 beds, with the ability to expand.

More than 200 people are on the staff in Balad, including 15 to 20 surgeons. Although most come from Wilford Hall, about a dozen Air Force bases are represented. The staff is augmented by Australian Air Force doctors and nurses.

Changes and concerns

The Air Force took over in September from the Army's 31st Combat Support Hospital. Only a few changes were made, said Dr. (Col.) Greg Wickern, commander of the 332nd Expeditionary Medical Group, which runs the hospital.

For one, infection control was enhanced, he said. The place was scrubbed from top to bottom and measures increased to keep out the dust that seeps in everywhere. Hand washing is emphasized even more than usual. Dressings are to be changed only in the sterile confines of an operating room, not the ward.

"I don't think we've had a single external wound healing post-operative infection," said Wickern, a pediatrician by trade back in Texas. "That's just amazing under these conditions."

Also, the Air Force added a team to handle injuries to the neck and head, something that was not part of the 31st CSB. Until then, cases requiring such care were sent to the combat support hospital in Baghdad.

For the first two months, business was brisk, but manageable,

nothing out of the ordinary. Wickern admitted to some concern as the possibility of an all-out battle on his doorstep drew closer.

"I knew we had the experience," he said.

But, he added, "We were a little worried about the shock and awe."

Second Lt. Aidan O'Neil, a nurse in labor and delivery back home, said she didn't know what to expect.

She works on the post-operative ward and is modest about it, saying she doesn't do the heroic things done in the emergency room or in surgery.

"I make sure they get their antibiotics so they don't get infections," she said.

Sometimes, she said, the patients weren't in the ward more than 10 minutes before they were whisked away for evacuation.

"We had patients who begged not to be evacuated out of the theater," she said.

When the wounded troops woke up from surgery, she said, "the first they want to know is, 'Where's my buddy?'"

O'Neil found the time as often as she could to check for them. It was a thrill for her to report back that the patient's buddy was doing well in a bed nearby.

"What they do is great," O'Neil said of the wounded troops. "What I do is a privilege." LeBlanc, recalling the frenetic days in the E.R., said, "Considering what the guys in Fallujah were going through, what we had to do seemed reasonable."

Quinn, an allergist and immunologist, added: "I don't think I'll ever get used to battlefield injuries to kids."

Back to normal

A few days after the chaos subsided, the hospital was running along at a more normal pace. It still had a number of Iraqi patients — fighters who helped the coalition. They can't be evacuated until their care and safety can be guaranteed.

But the emergency room was back to treating patients who had twisted ankles playing basketball or something equally mundane.

Reflecting on the effort during "the Fallujah surge," as some called it, the staff gave itself pat on the back.

"There's no weakness in this team," said Jenkins.

He praised everyone, from the emergency room crew and the x-ray technicians to the supply personnel and the blood lab staff.

He had especially credited the forward medical teams, which were the first to treat the wounded and get them back.

Added Wickern said, "I knew it would go well. I expected it to go well."

But, he said, the result was "better than I ever would have expected."

LeBlanc said, "I think we did great. I know we did great. There's no doubt. The criteria is, 'Is this a place you would want to be taken if you were injured?'"

The answer is, yes.



Airman 1st Class Alvin Thomas scrubs a surgical table at the Air Force Theater Hospital at Balad Air Base, Iraq.

E-mail Ron Jensen at: jensen@mail.estrps.osd.mil

Army may double some officers' war tours

Plan calls for filling 500 slots by extending tours of O-4s, O-5s from 179 days to one year

BY TOM BOWMAN
The Baltimore Sun

WASHINGTON — The Army is planning to double service time for hundreds of officers going to Iraq and Afghanistan — an effort to meet "war time needs" that would include pulling officers out of military professional schools or delaying entry into these academic programs so they can deploy overseas, officials said.

The plan calls for filling around 500 staff slots between Iraq and Afghanistan in the coming months, with majors and lieutenant colonels serving a year in those countries rather than the current 179 days.

The Army is also considering "unconventional solutions" to its staffing problems, which include requiring early graduation or delayed entry into professional military education programs and curtailing some family-oriented programs, such as one that allows soldiers to extend their tours by a year so their children don't finish high school, according to an Army memo obtained by The Baltimore Sun.

One Army officer said there are plans to pull at least a dozen officers from the current 215 who are pursuing master's degrees in strategic studies at the Army War College in Carlisle, Pa., to help meet the need for war zone officers. But an Army spokesman said no decisions have been made about tapping officers, who are half-way through their yearlong course work.

"It's not the case, as we speak. We're ex-



Myers

McCain

ploring options," said Lt. Col. Kevin P. Arata, a spokesman for the Human Resources Command in Alexandria, Va.

A "small number" of majors were pulled from the Army's Command and General Staff College at Fort Leavenworth, Kan., last year and sent to Iraq or Afghanistan before they completed the normal year of schoolwork, although they "already qualified in their requirements," Arata said. Plans to extend duty for more than 500 officers is designed to stabilize staffs in Afghanistan and Iraq to improve command and control ongoing operations, he said.

But some officers say the decisions are likely to harm morale and lead to increased numbers of retirements.

"A lot of people who have options to retire, will retire," said a lieutenant colonel who already has served in Iraq and received the memo, which was sent last week to several thousand officers. The officer, who requested anonymity, added, "We are eating our seed corn."

Arata said he doubted the planned efforts would hurt morale. "Most people realize we're a nation at war," he said. "As professional soldiers that doesn't become an issue."

But the Army's new plan to extend tours, curtail professional education and also curb some family programs come as some troops in Iraq are being extended beyond their one-year mark. About 6,500 soldiers — split between the 1st Cavalry Division and the 1st Infantry Division — are being extended for at least two more months.

There is speculation that other troops also may be extended or additional soldiers sent from bases in the United States to battle the growing insurgency and provide security for Iraq's planned elections in January. There are now 140,000 U.S. troops in Iraq and another 20,000 in Afghanistan.

Some members of Congress are pressing for more U.S. troops in Iraq.

Arizona Sen. John McCain, a Republican, called for "at least 40,000 or 50,000 more" troops last Sunday on NBC's "Meet the Press." And Sen. Jack Reed, D-R.I., a former Army officer who recently returned from a trip to Iraq, has said, "There's a legitimate issue about the number of troops."

Asked Tuesday about the need for more troops in Iraq, Gen. Richard B. Myers, chairman of the joint chiefs of staff, told reporters at the Pentagon that commanders are continually reviewing tour levels.

And Defense Secretary Donald H.

Rumsfeld, who appeared with Myers, said, "The answer is that the security situation on the ground is going to determine whether or not you increase or decrease troops or leave them where they are, knowing that during this period the Iraqi security forces are coming up."

Arata denied that the efforts outlined in the memo reveal that the Army is spread too thinly to deal with its overseas missions, a view held by some active-duty and retired officers, as well as some members of Congress. "We're certainly looking at different ways of doing things. I wouldn't say we're stretched," he said.

But retired Army Lt. Gen. John Riggs, who oversaw the Army's modernization efforts and angered top Pentagon officials by declaring early this year that the Army needed at least 10,000 more soldiers, said the memo reveals a nagging problem. "We don't have enough Army," he said.

Riggs, a highly decorated Vietnam War veteran who retired this year, now says the Army's current plan to temporarily increase the 480,000-soldier Army by 30,000 troops over the next several years is a "halfway measure," given the ongoing missions overseas.

"The tens of thousands are probably a stop-gap measure," said Riggs. "It may be greater than 100,000."

The Army's leadership, however, has argued that it wants to temporarily boost the number of troops to deal with the current "emergency" situation abroad, rather than permanently increase the force to a level that may not be necessary in the future and would be too costly to maintain.

Volunteers make sure there's no shortage of blood

When the Air Force hospital on Balad Air Base in Iraq needs donors, all it has to do is ask and people line up

BY RON JENSEN
Stars and Stripes

BALAD AIR BASE, Iraq — When the Air Force Theater Hospital needs whole blood, it has only one ask.

Soldiers, airmen, Marines and civilians will descend on the hospital to roll up their sleeves and bleed for the cause.

"Usually the problem is, we have too many people," said Dr. (Lt. Col.) Jim Quinn, chief of staff of the hospital at Balad Air Base, which the Army calls Logistics Support Area Anasouda.

Whatever you call the base, the people who send out the request for blood call the response "wonderful."

"I've had to turn them away. They show up in droves," said Maj. Jody Noe, officer in charge at the hospital's blood laboratory. "We've had them line up out the hallway."

The hospital, operated by the 332nd Expeditionary Medical Group, has been busy lately. It treated hundreds of wounded American GIs, Iraqi troops, enemy fighters and civilians from the recent fighting in Fallujah and used large amounts of blood in the process.

One doctor remembered a GI with leg wounds who required "three human beings' worth" of blood before he was stabilized.

During the week of the Fallujah offensive, the hospital gave out 281 units, said Master Sgt. Michael Kent, a technician in the blood laboratory. It has transfused nearly 1,000 pints since the Air Force medics arrived in September.

For most blood needs, the hospital can use blood products, such as packed red cells, that can be shipped and stored for long periods of time.

Those products come mostly from donors at American military bases around the world.

However, when the clotting qualities of platelets are needed, donors are required. Platelets cannot be stored.

"The only way to do that is with fresh blood," Quinn said. "We've got a very good supply of everything but platelets."

Noe said, "We can save [whole blood] for 24 hours. We like to give it within eight hours."

That's why the hospital is so thankful for the quick response of the donors. When a need arises, e-mails slither to all corners of the base, home of 23,000 people, asking for a particular blood type. Within 15 minutes, Noe said, volunteers start showing up.

Sometimes the meet is met before everyone is even screened.

"We'll send them home and tell them to keep their ears open," she said.

Although people should wait eight weeks before donating



RON JENSEN/Stars and Stripes

Tech Sgt. Danelito Villanueva tests blood donated at the Air Force Theater Hospital at Balad Air Base, Iraq. Volunteers usually swap the hospital when donors are needed.

again, Noe said, she has caught people returning within three days, offering another pint.

The base isn't the only place that needs donors, Noe said. De-

spite the ability to store many of the blood products for long periods of time, there is a need for continued blood donation at military bases to maintain that sup-

ply. "We need it," she said. "We need it badly."

E-mail Ron Jensen at: jensenr@mail.strips.osd.mil

'We are going to pay for this in blood'

BY SCOTT GOLD

Los Angeles Times

DONA ANA ARMY CAMP, N.M. — Members of a National Guard battalion preparing for deployment to Iraq said this week that they are under strict lockdown and being treated like prisoners rather than soldiers by Army commanders at the remote desert camp where they are training.

Even more troubling, a number of the Guard troops said, is that the training they have received is so poor and equipment shortages so prevalent they fear their casualty rate will be needlessly high when they arrive in Iraq early next year.

"We are going to pay for this in blood," one Guard member said.

They said they believe their treatment and training reflects an institutional bias against National Guard troops by commanders in the active-duty Army, an allegation that Army commanders denied.

Army commanders said the concerns were an inevitable result of the military's decision to shore up its strained military by turning "citizen-soldiers" into fully-integrated, front-line combat troops.

About 40 percent of the troops in Iraq are either reservists or National Guard troops.

The 680 members of the 1st Battalion of the 148th Infantry Regiment were activated in August, and are preparing for deployment at Dona Ana, a former World War II prisoner-of-war camp, 25 miles from its large parent base, Fort Bliss, Texas.

Members of the battalion, headquartered in Modesto, Calif., said in two-dozen interviews that they are allowed no visitors or travel passes, have scant contact with their families and that morale is terrible.

Iraq-bound Guard unit alleges training unequal, inadequate; leaders disagree

"I feel like an inmate with a weapon," said Cpl. Jajuane Smith, 31, a six-year Guard veteran from Fresno, Calif., who works for an armored transport company when not on active duty.

Several soldiers have fled Dona Ana by vaulting over rolls of barbed wire that surround the small camp, the Guard troops interviewed said. Others, they said, are contemplating going AWOL, at least temporarily, to reunite with their families for Thanksgiving.

Lt. Col. Michael Hubbard, of Fort Bliss, said the military largely must confine the soldiers to Dona Ana to ensure that their training is complete before they are sent to Iraq.

"A lot of these individuals are used to doing this two days a month and then going home," Hubbard said. "Now the job is 24/7. And they experience culture shock."

But many of the soldiers interviewed said the problems they cite go much deeper than culture shock. And military analysts agree that tensions between active-duty soldiers and National Guard troops have been exacerbated as the war in Iraq has required dangerous and long-term deployments from both.

In the most highly publicized incident, in October more than two dozen Army reservists in Iraq refused to drive a fuel convoy to a town north of Baghdad because the

trucks they had been given were not armored for combat duty.

At Dona Ana, soldiers have questioned their commanders about conditions at the camp, occasionally breaking the protocol of formation drills to do so. They said they have been told repeatedly that they cannot be trusted because they are not active-duty soldiers — though many of them are former active-duty soldiers now in their 30s and 40s who work in law enforcement, banking and business.

"I'm a cop. I've got a career, a house, a family, a college degree," said one sergeant, who lives in Southern California and spoke, like most of the soldiers, on condition of anonymity.

"I came back to the National Guard specifically to go to Baghdad, because I believed in it, believed in the mission. But I have regretted every day of it. This is demoralizing, demeaning, degrading. And we're supposed to be ambassadors to another country? We're supposed to go to war like this?"

Pentagon and Army commanders rejected the allegation that National Guard or Reserve troops are prepared for war differently than their active-duty counterparts.

"There is no difference," said Lt. Col. Chris Rodney, an Army spokesman in Washington. "We are, more than ever, one Army. Some have to come from a little far-

ther back — they have a little less training. But the goal is to get everybody the same."

The guardsmen at Dona Ana were scheduled to train for six months before beginning a yearlong deployment. They recently learned, however, that the Army plans to send them overseas a month early — in January, most likely — as it speeds up troop movement to compensate for a shortage of full-time, active-duty troops.

Hubbard, the officer at Fort Bliss, also said conditions at Dona Ana are designed to mirror the harsh and often thankless assignments the soldiers will take on in Iraq. That was an initiative launched by Brig. Gen. Joseph Chavez, commander of the 29th Separate Infantry Brigade, which includes the 148th regiment. The program has resulted in everything from an alcohol ban to armed guards at the entrance to Dona Ana, Hubbard said.

"We are preparing you and training you for what you're going to encounter over there," Hubbard said. "And they just have to go get used to it."

The soldiers also said they are risking courts-martial or other punishment by speaking publicly about their situation. But Staff Sgt. Lorenzo Dominguez, 45, one of the soldiers who allowed his identity to be revealed, said he fears that if nothing changes, men in his platoon will be killed in Iraq.

"Some of us are going to die there, and some of us are going to die unnecessarily because of the lack of training," he said. "So I don't care. Let them court-martial me. I want the American public to know what is going on. My men are guilty of one thing: volunteering to serve their country. And we are at the end of our rope."

Message for our men and women in uniform...

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IN THE WORLD

Iran insists on making changes to U.N. accord

By GEORGE JAHN
The Associated Press

VIENNA, Austria — Iran insisted Thursday it had a right to exempt some equipment from an agreement with the European Union committing it to freeze all parts of a program that can make nuclear weapons-grade uranium — a move that diplomats said threatened to scuttle the deal.

Mohamed ElBaradei, the chief U.N. nuclear watchdog, revealed Iran's continued refusal to include some centrifuges in the agreement — which the EU says mandates a suspension of all activities related to uranium enrichment. ElBaradei spoke as board members of his International Atomic Energy Agency grappled with the text of a resolution meant to police Iran's suspension pledge.

One of the delegates, who demanded anonymity, described Iran's move as an attempt at arms twisting to wrest concessions on the language of the resolution. Tehran wants any text stripped of even the most indirect allusions to a "trigger mechanism" that would enable the board to ask the U.N. Security Council to deal with violations of the suspension pledge.

But another delegate said that — unless agreement is reached with the Europeans — Iran's apparent play could backfire and generate support for a more than yearlong U.S. effort for Security Council involvement.

Diplomats said the Americans — who insist Iran wants to make nuclear weapons — were unhappy with the draft, which made no direct reference to the possibility of reform. But Iranian President Mohamed Khatami said the text was "too tight" and would have to be watered down.

"This resolution is not a good resolution," Iran's state news agency IRNA quoted him as saying.

No agreement on the draft was expected Thursday.

Separately, ElBaradei said Pakistan gave the agency approval in principle to inspect some of its own nuclear equipment to test claims by Tehran. He suggested the agreement with Pakistan — traditionally secretive about its nuclear activities — could help answer questions about enriched uranium that Tehran insists was inadvertently imported on black-market components from Pakistan.

ElBaradei, head of the International Atomic Energy Agency, said his inspectors would be able to verify a suspension of all enrichment-related programs "with one exception" — centrifuges. He insists that part of the freeze agreement and claims it needs to run for research purposes.



Supporters of Ukraine's Prime Minister Viktor Yanukovich, right, and opposition candidate Viktor Yushchenko discuss the results of the elections in downtown Kiev on Thursday. Defeated presidential candidate Viktor Yushchenko filed an appeal with Ukraine's Supreme Court on Thursday to declare the election results invalid, the Interfax news agency reported.

Ukraine high court forbids release of election results

By JIM HEINTZ
The Associated Press

KIEV, Ukraine — Ukraine's Supreme Court said Thursday that the country's presidential election results would not be published as official until it considers an appeal filed by the opposition candidate, who has claimed the vote was rigged.

The decision could significantly boost supporters of opposition leader Viktor Yushchenko, who have flooded the streets of Kiev since the Sunday run-off and won significant international backing.

But it also forfeited a continuation of tension for several days. The appeal will be considered on Monday, court spokeswoman Liana Shlyaposhnikova said.

Prime Minister Viktor Yanukovich was declared winner of the election on Wednesday with a margin of about three percentage points, but he cannot be chosen president until the results are officially published.

Yushchenko's campaign filed an appeal earlier in the day.

The protesters have braved freezing temperatures in Kiev's Independence Square since Sunday's run-off election, saying the ballot was rigged to allow Yanukovich to win. They received a boost Thursday from visiting Lech Walesa, the founder of the Polish Solidarity movement, who said he was "amazed" at their enthusiasm and predicted their protest would succeed.

Walesa, in Ukraine to try to mediate in the crisis, said he met earlier with Yanukovich, "not as a presidential candidate but as prime minister. If he is prime minister, then he should unify and not divide the people."

Western observers have denounced the vote as fraudulent, citing voter intimidation, multiple voting and other irregularities. The United States and the European Union said they couldn't accept the results as legitimate and warned the Ukrainian government of "consequences" in relations with the West.

It was unclear whether Yushchenko's appeal was legally valid.

According to the Interfax news agency, only election results from individual voting districts can be challenged, not results as a whole. The opposition also planned to file complaints in regional courts to protest the vote results.

The Western-leaning reformist Yushchenko and his allies had called for an "all-Ukrainian political strike" starting Thursday.

However, there were no indications that a national strike was taking hold, although workers from several factories in Yushchenko's stronghold region of Lviv were reportedly leaving their jobs to come to Kiev.

In another sign of a growing split, some 300 Ukrainian diplomats signed a joint statement of support for Yushchenko, a diplomat told The Associated Press on condition of anonymity.

Army deserter case

TOKYO — U.S. Army deserter sent to North Korea Charles Jenkins will be released this week from a jail near Tokyo, six days earlier than planned, a media report said Thursday.

Jenkins, who was convicted of desertion and of aiding the enemy in a Nov. 3 U.S. court-martial and sentenced to 30 days imprisonment, will be released at Yokosuka Naval Base on Saturday, Kyodo News agency reported, citing unnamed sources.

Jenkins deserted his Army unit along the Demilitarized Zone between the Koreans in January 1965.

Quake shakes Italy

ROME — An earthquake shook northern Italy overnight, injuring about nine people and damaging scores of buildings, officials said Thursday. Hundreds of people fled their homes and poured into the streets.

The 5.2-magnitude tremor hit just before midnight and was felt across northern and central Italy. But most of the damage was concentrated in smaller towns near Lake Garda, where the epicenter was located.

The National Institute of Geophysics in Rome said that there were six aftershocks after the main quake, the strongest of which had a magnitude of 2.1.

Another quake, with a magnitude of 4.8, hit the southern Adriatic coast on Thursday morning, said the institute. There were no reports of injuries or damage.

Snow falls over Athens

ATHENS, Greece — Athens, usually known for its high temperatures, received its first snowfall of the season Thursday, with a light dusting causing heavy traffic jams on streets leading into the Greek capital.

The snow, which mostly fell on the city's northern suburbs, came as temperatures plunged to near freezing around the capital.

Temperatures were expected to rise by the weekend, the National Weather Service said.

Estonia bombing kills 2

TALLINN, Estonia — Two people were killed and three injured in northern outskirts of the Estonian capital early Thursday morning when a man blew himself up after taking a police officer hostage. Police were quick to say it was not terror-related.

The man, who wasn't identified, had taken the officer hostage inside a police bus in Tallinn's residential Olumäe area, police spokesman Robert Antropov told Estonian state television.

He was wearing a belt containing explosives and detonated them, killing himself and officer Julia Gorbatskaya, a member of the department's canine unit.

From The Associated Press

Russia, EU fail to complete negotiations

The Associated Press

THE HAGUE, Netherlands — Russia and the European Union failed to complete negotiations Thursday on a "strategic partnership" because of disagreements over security, but said they were confident that final agreement will be reached next year.

The goal of the partnership is to boost ties in four areas: economy; freedom, security and justice; external security; and research, education and culture.

"We have not reached agreement on all" points, Dutch Prime Minister Jan Peter Balkenende

said after meeting with Russian President Vladimir Putin at the EU-Russia summit.

Putin said: "Everyone sees movement forward... This work will be accomplished" by May 2005.

The Dutch leader, whose country currently holds the EU presidency, said there would be further talks at the need was for "quality rather than speed."

The proposed "strategic partnership" the EU and Russia discussed is akin to a deal the European grouping has been pursuing with Ukraine. Russia, however, is demanding terms that would reflect its status as a world power.

Balkenende said the two sides could not agree on how to craft closer cooperation on security issues, an area that touches on Russia's relations with Ukraine, Moldova, Belarus and the Caucasus republics.

The EU wants to reach out to its eastern neighbors with economic and political assistance. Moscow, though, is wary of a clash between an expanding Europe and its sphere of influence.

Moscow has complained about what it considers Western Europe's interference on human rights in Chechnya. It also accuses the EU of double standards.

IN THE STATES

2 CIA foreign chiefs to retire

BY SIOBHAN McDONOUGH

The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The chiefs of the CIA's Europe and Far East divisions are retiring, according to a federal official, marking the latest high-level departures at the spy agency since Porter Goss took over as director at the end of September.

The names of the officials will not be released because they work undercover.

The two CIA officials were in the highest echelon of clandestine service, the directorate of operations. The New York Times reported in Thursday's editions. The federal official confirmed the departures, on condition of anonymity.

The retirements came just 10 days after two other top officials — Deputy Director for Operations Stephen Kappes and his immediate deputy, Michael Sulick — told colleagues they were leaving the CIA.

It was unclear whether Kappes and Sulick resigned voluntarily or were asked to step down.

Earlier this month, the agency's No. 2 official, John McLaughlin, retired, citing personal reasons. The CIA has been heavily criticized for prewar in-

telligence lapses in Iraq and the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks. And former officials have described intense friction within the agency with Goss now in charge.

Some said there were concerns that more officers at the CIA's counterterrorism center and elsewhere may be asked to resign or told that they no longer have a future at the agency.

Goss, a former CIA officer and headed the House Intelligence Committee while in congress, made waves with the clandestine service even before President Bush nominated him to head the CIA.

Officials as senior as former CIA Director George Tenet fumed over assertions by Goss' committee this summer that the clandestine service "needs fixing" and that the agency could become a "stilted bureaucracy incapable of even the slightest bit of success."

Tuesday, President Bush ordered what may end up being a major expansion of the CIA, calling for the agency to add thousands of new analysts and spies as part of an ongoing buildup in the war on terrorism.

The directive set no timetable for the changes and offered no indication the White House will ask congress for more money to fund the plan.

GOP lawmakers still sweating tax bill

BY ALAN FRAM

The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — A handful of lawmakers voted for spending legislation to keep the government from shutting down as House Democrats resolved to let Republicans twist in the wind a little longer over a provision passed last week that both parties agree was a bad idea.

They'll fix it later, when the Democrats decide to let the Republicans stop sweating. For now, Wednesday's vote by skeptical crews in the House and Senate on a stopgap spending bill keeps the government operating until early December.

The holdup is over language

buried in a \$388 billion spending bill that could let leaders of Congress' Appropriations committees examine income tax returns.

Both parties fear killing the tax return idea before it becomes law and the Senate has already voted to do so. But Democrats blocked a House vote until Dec. 6.

That delay gave Democrats more time to criticize majority Republicans for letting the provision slip through and for using their muscle to ram bills through Congress with little chance for lawmakers to learn what is in them. The overall bill and accompanying documents stood 3,646 pages tall on lawmakers' desks when they approved it Saturday.

The measure was completed in

round-the-clock negotiations so exhausting that Rep. David Obey, D-Wis., said Wednesday that two aides fainted from sleeplessness. He said such procedures are hurting Congress' credibility with the public.

The discovery of the provision — made Saturday by a Democratic aide on the Senate Budget Committee as Congress was considering the overall spending package — saved Congress from "a massive embarrassment," said Rep. Robert Matsui, D-Calif.

"Had this become law, there would have been some time over the next few years where someone would have abused that process and someone's returns would have been disclosed to the press," he said.



Valparaiso, Ind., Mayor Jon Costas, right, listens as Superintendent of Valparaiso Community Schools Michael Brickner, center, talks with Valparaiso Police Chief Michael Brickner during a news conference at Valparaiso High School on Wednesday following a stabbing.

Student slashes five classmates in Indiana high school attack

BY TOM COYNE

The Associated Press

VALPARAISO, Ind. — A student carrying a machete and another knife slashed five classmates Wednesday morning as they watched a Spanish class video, authorities said.

Eight Valparaiso High School students were taken to the hospital, including the accused attacker, a 15-year-old freshman, Police Chief Michael Brickner said. All but one of those injured were released by Wednesday afternoon, he said. Five suffered cuts and the others complained of pain from other injuries, authorities said.

Authorities did not release any information about a possible motive for the attack, which happened as classes were starting at the school some 20 miles south-east of Gary.

Brickner said that before carrying out the attack, the student asked his teacher for permission to close the classroom door. He shut the door and then started swinging the weapons at his classmates, the police chief said.

"Students began to flee from the classroom, and he fled from the classroom and was tackled to the floor by school faculty members," he said.

Brickner said one of the knives was a machete and the other was a serrated knife. The youth accused in the attack remained in custody.

The boy is an A-B student who started in the Valparaiso school system this year, Brickner said. "I think it's accurate to say that when the teachers learned who this student was, they were very surprised," he said.

Wis. hunting death suspect was Army Guard marksman

BY TED GREGORY AND

GLENN JEFFERS

Chicago Tribune

RICE LAKE, Wis. — As blaze orange-rabbit memorials started appearing on car antennas in this north woods community and grieving residents prepared funerals for six people killed in a deer-hunting trespassing dispute, more details emerged Wednesday about the man suspected of the crime.

Military records show that Chai Soua Vang, 36, a St. Paul truck driver, received a U.S. Army commendation as a sharpshooter and was a qualified rifleman in the use of an M-16 during his six years with the National Guard.

In addition, St. Paul Police reported that they had been called to Vang's home on St. Paul's troubled lower east end five times since June 2003. In two of those incidents, Vang called police to settle domestic disputes at his home.

Accounts differ about precisely how the shooting began. In a statement made to investigators Monday, Vang, a Hmong immigrant from Laos and naturalized U.S. citizen, reportedly said he mistakenly had wandered upon the deer stand. According to authorities, Vang said he was taunted by racial slurs before one of the hunters pointed a rifle at him and fired a shot, which missed as Vang crouched.

Vang said he then began shooting the people, according to police.

One of the hunters who survived gave a different account, saying that Vang fired the first shots. Vang has been in custody, charged, but is being held on a \$2.5 million bail.

Family and friends of the killed and wounded hunters have rejected Vang's account, saying he is attempting to lessen his own responsibility for killing six people and wounding two others.

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Holocaust survivor reunites with savior

BY VERENA DOBNIK
The Associated Press

NEW YORK — In a meeting that left her trembling with emotion, Hanna Morawiecka was reunited with the Jewish boy whose family she helped rescue from extermination in Poland during World War II.

A beaming Andre Nowacki, now 68, greeted the Polish woman at Kennedy Airport.

"Hanna Morawiecka, my little sister," he said Wednesday after hugging her and presenting her with a bouquet of carnations.

"You haven't changed since you were 9," she told him in Polish.

They first met in 1942, when Morawiecka, her two sisters and their mother took in the Nowacki family after Nowacki's father was sent to a Nazi death camp. The Catholic family, at risk to their own lives, provided a safe haven for the Jewish mother and son at their Warsaw home.

If the Germans had discovered the Nowackis, the Morawiecka sisters "would have been shot on the spot," said Nowacki, whose father owned a knitting factory.

Morawiecka's father was a member of the Underground.

Both families fled a burning Warsaw in 1944 after the Germans moved in to quell an uprising, and they hid in the countryside around the Polish city. The families went their separate ways after exchanging promises to find each other after the war.

Nowacki made his way to Israel, Canada and then the United States. He carried with him through every stop the memory of Morawiecka, five years his senior, and the bravery of her family.

Nowacki spent two decades searching for them, starting about 40 years ago and going through the Red Cross and other organizations and individuals. Finally, having all but given up, he told a friend in Poland whose father was unemployed, "I will hire your father to find my family. And he did it in one day. He had connections."

Morawiecka and Nowacki kept up their contact. But it wasn't until this week, when she boarded a plane to spend Thanksgiving with him and his American family, that the pair met face to face.



Sharon Walker and her son Randal of Lake Village, Ark., wait for their bus to Flint, Mich. in the Greyhound bus terminal Wednesday in Chicago. Millions of travelers throughout the nation have taken to the roads and skies for the Thanksgiving weekend, bucking a trend of lower-than-normal holiday travel in recent years.

Home for the holiday?

Long lines at airports, snowy roads in midwest plus high winds and rain make for trying travel

BY ANNA JOHNSON
The Associated Press

Travelers didn't plan on starting their long Thanksgiving weekend stuck in airports or driving on slippery roads, but then again they hadn't figured on snow — and a lot of it.

A blanket of white stretched from the Great Lakes region to the central Plains. Accumulations from the Midwest's first major snowfall of the season ranged from 4 inches in southeastern Iowa to 9 inches in southern Michigan, the National Weather Service said.

High winds and thunderstorms also worked their way across the region Wednesday.

The snow caused flight cancellations and delays as long as three hours at Chicago's O'Hare International Airport and up to two hours at the city's other airport, Midway.

Marc Hendrickson of Seattle gave up on flying after O'Hare canceled his connecting flight to Madison, Wis. He bought a bus ticket to meet his girlfriend in Wisconsin and the two planned to drive to Dubuque, Iowa, for the holiday.

"I just want to get there — that's my main concern," Hendrickson said.

Bad weather in Michigan forced Northwest Airlines to cancel 37 flights, 22 of them into or out of Detroit. At Lansing's Capital City Airport, a Northwest Airlines jet carrying 87 passengers and four crew

slid off a snow-slicked runway during landing. No one was injured.

Wind gusts of 57 mph were recorded near Champaign, Ill. High winds along Interstate 74 near Greensburg, Ind., caused a tractor trailer to overturn, leaving the highway strewn with debris.

Indiana also had severe thunderstorms and heavy snow. The rain fell across the south, the snow in the north.

"We've had quite a few crashes — slideoffs, fender-benders and people ending up in ditches, but no injuries," said Indiana State Trooper Tom Szymanski.

Elsewhere in the country, highways were bumper-to-bumper in Georgia as drivers faced thunderstorms and a threat of tornadoes, part of a system that killed at least four people elsewhere in the South.

"We're seeing some hectic and chaotic driving situations — the road rage, the rear endings, people not allowing other motorists to change lanes," said Georgia State Patrol Trooper Larry Schnall.

The weather also disrupted travel in the Northeast. Airports in New York City, Boston and Newark, N.J., were experiencing delays up to two hours because of rain.

Drivers cruised through Pennsylvania Turnpike toll plazas for free Wednesday after toll collectors and maintenance workers went on strike hours before the holiday rush. Turnpike managers began collecting tolls early Thanksgiving Day.



Spongebob makes his New York debut

The Spongebob Squarepants balloon waits Thursday morning to join it's first Macy's parade in New York. Thousands of people lined the streets to see the traditional Thanksgiving Day event and to cheer on some newsmen like Spongebob.

Virginia families offer troops a home for the holidays

BY SONJA BARISIC
The Associated Press

NORFOLK, Va. — Every year for almost 20 years, Chris and Walter Plankin have made room for at least two strangers at their Thanksgiving table.

They are among kindhearted families who volunteer at this time of year to take in more than 100 young military members stationed in southeastern Virginia who can't make it home for the

holiday.

"It's not their home, but they usually have a good time," said Chris Plankin, who spends up to \$5,000 every year to treat guests to a fabulous feast of turkey, roast beef, candied yams, mashed potatoes, cookies, cheese cake and more.

The "Adopt a Servicemember" program, in its 18th year, is coordinated by the USO of Hampton Roads. The nonprofit group works to enhance the quality of

life and provide public support for armed service members and their families.

Most of the service members taking part in the Thanksgiving program are Army students doing with basic training who are living at Fort Eustis in Newport News for a few weeks or months while they learn military occupational specialties.

Many would have spent Thursday on post and eaten in the mess hall if the volunteer families

hadn't adopted them for the day.

"I think it would be pretty lonely, just me and my buddies, hanging out in the barracks," said Cody Weaver, 18, of Roseville, Calif., a private in the Army National Guard who is training to be a Blackhawk helicopter mechanic.

The four-day holiday break was too short for Weaver to head all the way to the West Coast, but he was grateful to be able to spend his first Thanksgiving

away from home with a family in Virginia.

Jan and Steve Daum of Gloucester were happy to share the holiday with Weaver and Pvt. Matt Hendrickson, 19, of Terra Haute, Ind., who also is learning to be a Blackhawk mechanic.

For safety reasons, service members are sent to the families' homes in pairs, with some families taking in more than two people.

Wash. governor's race faces third recount

BY DAVID AMMONS
The Associated Press

OLYMPIA, Wash. — For Dino Rossi, a 42-vote lead was enough to declare victory in the Washington governor's race. Christine Gregoire, however, begged to differ.

And so, with a slim margin and a candidate unwilling to concede Wednesday, the state probably has another recount — a third — to look forward to.

Rossi, a self-made real estate

millionaire and former state Senate budget chairman, was the underdog throughout the campaign but emerged with a 261-vote lead after the initial vote tally ended last week. The margin was so tiny that it triggered the automatic recount.

The recount that wrapped up Wednesday was done by machine. The campaigns or their parties can now request a hand recount for some or all of the counties, but they have to pay for it.

Gregoire, the state attorney general,

said the Democratic party has indicated that it is willing to pay for the recount. A statewide recount would cost the Democrats about \$700,000.

Secretary of State Sam Reed, the state's chief elections officer, said he plans to certify the machine recount on Tuesday.

The campaigns or their parties have three business days to request a full or partial manual recount.

Reed said he would probably direct that such a recount begin

Dec. 6, and that the job could last until about Christmas. If a partial recount changes the outcome, state law requires a manual recount in the rest of the state. That would extend the uncertainty past Christmas. Inauguration day is Jan. 12.

Rossi, 45, was hoping to become the first Republican since 1980 to get elected governor. He ran on a platform of change and job creation and billed himself as a "conservative with a social conscience."

Gregoire, 57, was hoping to become the state's second woman governor. She carried eight of the 39 counties, most notably the largest, King, which includes heavily Democratic Seattle. Gregoire was strongly backed by the women's movement and was best known for battling America's tobacco industry.

Gregoire said the race continues.

"It's a 42-vote" margin, my friends, that is a tie vote," she told reporters and supporters in Seattle.

Marine widow robbed

NORRISTOWN, Pa. — A man pleaded guilty Wednesday to ransacking the apartment of a newlywed Marine reservist killed in Iraq, breaking in while his widow was with family members planning the soldier's funeral.

Prosecutors said Kevin Selovski, 24, and an alleged accomplice stole a computer and video games to buy heroin.

Prosecutors said Selovski had called the widow of Cpl. John Todd, 25, and expressed his condolences.

Todd was killed July 29 by a roadside bomb in eastern Baghdad, he was serving his second deployment in Iraq.

Ornaments by Tripp

WASHINGTON — Seems Linda Tripp is still preoccupied with the White House.

The woman who made Monica Lewinsky a household name has designed two hand-painted glass ornaments, one depicting the first White House Christmas in 1800, and the other in 1861.

The limited-edition ornaments, available at the Christmas Sleigh in Middleburg, Va., cost \$65 each, with some proceeds going to a children's cancer charity.

From wire services

FBI interviews Halliburton whistleblower

The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — An Army whistleblower who raised concerns that the Pentagon improperly awarded business to Vice President Dick Cheney's former company has been interviewed extensively by the FBI and is gathering documents to help agents.

Army Corps of Engineers contract officer Bunatine Greenhouse, whose allegations about the Houston-based oil services company Halliburton surfaced in the final weeks of the presidential campaign, was interviewed for a full day last week by the FBI and Army criminal investigators, her lawyer said Wednesday.

"It questioned her about all of her concerns, and they asked questions regarding potential involvement of people at higher-level positions," attorney Michael Kohn said in an interview.

The Associated Press reported last month that the FBI had expanded a criminal probe into allegations Halliburton overcharged the government for fuel, adding questions about whether the Bush administration improperly awarded business in Iraq and the

Balkans to Halliburton without bidding.

In a related development, the inspector general reviewing the spending of U.S. funds in Iraq is recommending the Army consider withholding 15 percent of Halliburton's money on future contracts to address allegations the company has not documented all of the work it has been paid for in the past.

Halliburton spokeswoman Cathy Gist said Wednesday night the company was aware of discussions about a 15 percent withholding but had not been formally told of any plan to implement it. "We will continue to work directly with our client regarding resolution for this issue," she said.

Greenhouse has alleged that she began raising questions to her superiors about why the Pentagon was allowing business to go to Halliburton's KBR subsidiary without competitive bidding.

She contends she then was frozen out from decisions when she pressed her concerns. Kohn said FBI agents interviewed his client for more than eight hours on Nov. 17. They asked questions about who in the Pentagon might have



Bunatine Greenhouse

applied pressure to get business to Halliburton, he said.

Kohn declined to identify any of the higher officials that were discussed during the interview, but said no White House officials came up.

A legal source familiar with the interview said Greenhouse provided the FBI with new information about intervention on one of

the Halliburton matters by a senior defense official.

Kohn said his client was continuing to cooperate. Greenhouse "is in the process of providing additional documentation to both the bureau and the criminal investigation division of the Army," he said.

Pentagon auditors and congressional Democrats have repeatedly turned up problems with Halliburton's contracts. Among the examples cited are:

- The U.S. ambassador to Kuwait intervened to ensure that Halliburton retained a favored Kuwaiti subcontractor for gasoline imports to Iraq. Administration officials have said only career contracting officials made decisions on Halliburton contracts.

- In 2002, Cheney's chief of staff, a political appointee, was told the vice president's former company would receive no-bid work to restore Iraq's oil facilities. Cheney's spokesman said the information was not given to the vice president.

- Halliburton charged the government \$26.8 a gallon to import Kuwaiti gasoline to Iraq, a U.S. government agency told the same job for \$15.7 a gallon.

Death date nears for Texas woman convicted in slayings

BY MICHAEL GRACZYK
The Associated Press

GATESVILLE, Texas — Alton was 7. Farrah was almost 2.

The first letters of their names were meant to reflect the initials of their dad and mom — A and F, Adrian and Frances.

The last time Frances Newton saw her husband and children was more than 17 years ago, the evening of April 7, 1987, five days before her 22nd birthday. She'd run a few errands and was accompanied by a cousin as she returned to her Harris County apartment.

Adrian, Alton and Farrah were dead in the home. Two weeks later, Newton was arrested and charged with murdering her family.

Convicted and condemned, she's scheduled to become the first black woman executed in Texas on Dec. 1. In a state that annually leads the nation in executions, Newton will become the fourth woman executed in Texas since executions resumed in 1976, the 11th woman.

But Newton says she didn't murder her family. She believes the real killer is a drug dealer named "Charlie" who was upset

with her husband for not repaying a \$500 debt.

She says she remembers walking into the apartment, looking for her family, then finding Adrian's bloody body on the couch. Adrian, 23, had been shot in the head. Alton and Farrah were shot in the chest.

With no eyewitnesses and no confession, prosecutors built a circumstantial case.

Newton's case is the kind that shakes the confidence in the criminal justice system, according to lawyers trying to help her, and provides fodder for death penalty opponents questioning the competence of legal help, particularly for the poor.

Newton's court-appointed lead trial attorney was Ronald G. Mock, notorious for having his clients, perhaps as many as a dozen, wind up on death row.

Mock has been suspended or placed on probation by the State Bar of Texas at least three times since he first was licensed in 1978.

Earlier this year he was reprimanded for taking a case he wasn't competent to handle, accepting payment, then refusing to refund the money.

Newton, in a recent interview at the



Texas Department of Criminal Justice Mountain View Unit just north of Gatesville, where the state's nine condemned women are imprisoned, said when she was arrested, she got the sense that Mock was confident she wouldn't be there long.

But as she remained in jail for months awaiting trial, her confidence waned. Newton's mother contacted another Houston

Texas death row inmate Frances Newton, 39, of Houston, sits Tuesday in a visiting room at the Mountain View Unit near Gatesville, Texas. Newton is set to die Wednesday.

lawyer, David Eisen. With jury selection finally over, Eisen asked the Harris County court if he could join the case, but asked for time to investigate. Mock, he said, had conducted no investigation and never even talked to one witness. The court refused.

"She didn't get a fair trial, not even close," Eisen said.

OPINION

Clinton craves spotlight that has new focus

Our quiz today is a multiple-choice question: What does Bill Clinton want?

(A) To guide Democrats out of the deep woods.

Michael Goodwin



(B) To help heal the nation's bitter divisions.

(C) To pave the way for President Hillary.

The correct answer is all of the above — and none of the above.

What Bubba really wants is vindication. Everything else, including Hillary in the Oval Office, is just a

means to his end game of getting back on top again. It's all about one more comeback.

It ain't gonna happen.

Clinton's presiding over the opening of his \$165 million library looked like a happy trip down memory lane. Surrounded by family, friends and foes, he was the center of attention, the pudgy young politician turned elder statesman.

But behind the facade of generous tributes was the sad spectacle of the once-most-powerful man on Earth trying desperately to find his footing on history's rain-slicked ladder. It's a tricky climb, and time is no longer his friend — and not just because of his fragile health.

The world before 9/11 seems like a million years ago. Most of the political lessons he taught us then about the "third way" mean little now. In all the important ways, the future became unhinged from the past. And so the Man from Hope is never the Man from New Jersey.

That's not to say Bill Clinton isn't relevant. He is to the 30,000 devotees who

trekked to Arkansas and to the millions who look back with fondness on the first baby-boomer president.

And each time his party takes a presidential election, he looks more like a giant. It is shocking to remember that no Democrat since FDR has been elected twice — except Clinton.

Although he never won a majority of the popular vote, his two terms earned him a permanent spot in what one observer calls the inner circle of the world's most exclusive club.

Still, he wants more. He wants us to think of him as great and to still need him. But he wasn't great. And we don't need him.

It's not just Monica — though she comes to mind first, and the impeachment saga she launched will surely be in the top paragraph of his obit. His dismissing it in the library exhibit under the category of the "politics of persecution" was both tasteless and revealing.

Jesus did not fool around with interns.

But even Clinton's achievements of prosperity and peace now look hollow. In hindsight, we know that much of the prosperity was a bubble fueled by venal corporate criminals. And there was peace only because the Clinton White House chose not to see that Osama Bin Laden had already declared war on us.

The yearning for those days is foolish, but probably harmless — except for the Democratic Party. If its leaders look to Clinton for anything other than a pep talk, they are courting disaster.

American politics, like everything else, changed on 9/11. As the last election proved, the game is no longer about traditional standards of interest groups and issue positions. Biography, charisma and the polish of campaign matters far less than they did just four years ago.

The new gold standard is at once more



elusive and more precise. For every would-be leader, the test is this: Are you rock-solid? Those who cannot say yes, and convince voters, need not apply. Weakness, waffling, nuance, process — they're luxuries from a bygone era.

And for God's sake, no more parsing

and blurring. It's a gut-check world now, and half-truths are no longer half true. They're damnable lies.

Bubba had his run. His time, and times, have passed. He isn't ready to accept that, but we must. The future demands it.

Michael Goodwin is a New York Daily News columnist.

Once vocal on Iraq, Annan too quiet on controversy

Chicago Tribune

U.N. Secretary-General Kofi Annan can be generous with his opinions. He has pronounced the U.S.-led overthrow of Saddam Hussein to be "illegal," and he warned before the recent assault on Fallujah that a military campaign and "increased insurgent violence" put Iraq's January election at risk.

If only the Iraq people could hear the secretary-general's usual equivocal candor about their billions of dollars in oil money that Saddam looted from Annan's U.N. military. Nations looked the other way — or corruptly assisted. Instead, Annan continues to block efforts by congressional probes to inspect internal documents that would establish the United Nations' level of complicity.

And so, for lack of that candor, the scandal known as Oil-for-Food continues to rise toward Annan's chin. On his watch, the United Nations' biggest-ever relief operation has become its biggest-ever embarrassment. Remember those \$25,000 rewards that Saddam paid to families of Palestinian suicide bombers who had attacked Israeli citizens? The Associated Press now cites Jordanian bank records strongly indicating that Saddam used money stolen under Oil-for-Food to fund those terror bounties. The purported evidence even includes a canceled check delivered to one Palestinian family.

And those insurgents in Iraq? Now the heads of two U.S. congressional committees probing Oil-for-Food — Rep. Henry Hyde, R-Ill., and Sen. Norm Coleman, R-Minn. — have suggested that Oil-for-Food money

may be funding the killers who are preying on American troops.

For Annan and the United Nations, these are potentially devastating turns. Particularly given that the United Nations framed Oil-for-Food as a great humanitarian gesture.

Saddam was permitted to sell some oil, under U.N. supervision, and could use the proceeds to buy food and medicine for his people. Instead he parlayed the program into a vast scheme of kickbacks, bribes and extortions. He ripped off his own people to build his military, control police and purchase the fidelity of diplomats, public officials, influential citizens and companies all

over the globe.

Saddam's goal was to buy enough clout to end U.N. sanctions against Iraq. And he nearly got his way. His biggest secret payoffs allegedly went to powerful interests in Russia, France and China — nations that hold veto power in the U.N. Security Council. Those also happen to be three nations that were pushing to loosen trade sanctions on Iraq. And the same trio later helped keep the Security Council from enforcing its own resolutions against Saddam.

As early as 2000, the United Nations had indicated Saddam was ripping off its program. Annan needs to disclose in detail why the United Nations didn't intervene as Sadd-

am's thefts climbed to a suspected \$21 billion. A spokesman for the International Relations Committee, headed by Hyde, says, "If the U.N. continues to stonewall," Hyde's investigators "will find other ways."

That mission is imperative. As we have noted, the abuse of U.N. sanctions gave Saddam money and time. He used the former to fund his outlaw regime, the latter to brutalize and murder his people by the tens of thousands.

The United Nations, which views itself as noble, owes the world an explanation of why it tolerated that abuse. And so does Kofi Annan.

Mallard Fillmore

BY BRUCE TINSLEY



Officials say flu season off to a slow start

A flu shot is given to a patient last week in Barre, Vt. Across Vermont, 17 clinics gave 12,000 flu vaccines to people at highest risk from the flu.

AP



BY DANIEL YEE
The Associated Press

ATLANTA — The flu season in the United States is off to a slow start, with only Delaware and New York reporting significant outbreaks — a relief to government health authorities, given the U.S. vaccine shortage.

Even so, the "widespread" flu activity in Delaware — the first state to be classified at the nation's highest flu level — is a little misleading. The state meets the designation because confirmed cases of the flu had been found in every county of that state. But the state has only three counties — and six cases in all.

"From the data that we see, things haven't really taken off, it's continued flu activity at low levels in a lot of places," said Lynnette Brammer, a flu epidemiologist at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. "It looks like New York, the mid-Atlantic area is where things are starting to pick up, but it's early. At this point, you can't tell how the season's going to progress."

Nursing home outbreaks in New York prompted the CDC to classify that state as having "regional" flu activity — one step below "widespread." Most other states listed "sporadic" flu cases.

Although the flu season can

begin as early as October and last through April, most flu seasons do not peak until January.

Health authorities have said the slow start has been a relief, because it has given them extra time to warn people to prepare for the flu in a year that has been marked by a severe flu-shot shortage.

Only 61 million doses are available this season, including a nasal vaccine only for healthy people. But 98 million people, including 9 million children, need the vaccine, the CDC said.

Each year, the flu hospitalizes about 200,000 people and kills on average 36,000 people in the United States, according to the CDC.

Research: Umbilical-cord blood may also save adults

Procedure mostly used on kids with leukemia

BY JANET MCCONNAUGHEY
The Associated Press

NEW ORLEANS — Umbilical-cord blood, now used mostly to treat children with leukemia, could save thousands of adults with the disease each year who cannot find bone marrow donors, two big studies indicate.

A European study found that those who got cord blood were just as likely to be free of leukemia two years later as those who got marrow. A U.S. study looking at three-year survival yielded results almost as promising.

To Dr. Mary Horowitz of the Medical College of Wisconsin, senior author of the U.S. study, the message is clear: Umbilical cord blood can save adults.

Leukemia patients often undergo radiation or chemotherapy to kill their cancerous white blood cells — a treatment that wipes out their immune systems too. To restore their immune systems, doctors give these patients an infusion of bone marrow or umbilical cord blood, both of which contain stem cells capable of developing into every kind of blood cell.

Cord blood offers an important advantage over marrow that makes it particularly valuable for use in transplants: Its stem cells are less likely to attack the recipient.

ent's body. That allows a wider margin of error in matching up donors and recipients.

But up to now, cord blood has been considered suitable only for children, because each donation has only about one-tenth the number of stem cells in a marrow donation.

The two new studies, published in Thursday's New England Journal of Medicine, suggest that it is not a serious impediment.

In the European study, involving 62 patients, about one-third of both those who got matched marrow and those who got cord blood did not quite match their own tissues were alive after two years. In the U.S. study of 601 patients, about one-third of those who got matched marrow were leukemia-free after two years, compared with about one-fifth of those who got cord blood or unmatched marrow.

Both studies were based on records from transplants in the late 1990s and early 2000s.

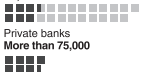
Using cord blood could improve the odds of getting a transplant for the 16,000 U.S. adult leukemia patients each year who cannot find a compatible marrow donor, said the U.S. study's leader, Dr. Mary J. Laughlin of Case Comprehensive Cancer Center in Cleveland.

Still, Dr. Nancy Kernan, assis-

Cord blood needed

Umbilical-cord blood is stored frozen to be used in treatment of life-threatening diseases. Public banks store the blood in addition to commercial storage for personal use.

DONORS OF STORED CORD BLOOD
Public Banks Goal
65,000



Private banks
More than 75,000

SOURCES: Cord Blood Registry; National Cord Blood Program; National Cord Blood Center

tant chief of marrow transplantation at Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center in New York, said cord blood transplants in adults should be done only as part of a study to look at and improve their effectiveness.

Public cord blood banks — where blood drawn from umbilical cords and placentas at birth is kept frozen — need to quadruple their supply to find a match for every leukemia patient who needs one.

With 4 million births a year in this country, most cord blood birth is kept frozen — need to quadruple their supply to find a match for every leukemia patient who needs one.

A federal Institute of Medicine committee is already looking into the best way to set up a national cord blood supply, and is scheduled to complete its report in March.

you can hold the attacks down and keep the disabling symptoms away, people can live their lives." In the most common form of MS, a worsening of neurologic function occurs intermittently.

There is growing scientific acceptance that MS is an autoimmune disorder. The immune system, which usually keeps the body safe from foreign organisms, attacks itself. With MS, the target is the brain and spinal cord.

Scientists at Biogen Idec of

Study: Protein may prevent damage after heart attacks

BY JOSEPH B. VERRENGIA
The Associated Press

DENVER — Texas scientists working with mice say a single dose of a common protein appears to protect the heart muscle from extensive damage after a heart attack.

The protein, known as thyroxine beta 4, is produced by its tissues throughout the body and is already known to help heal skin wounds.

The researchers now are planning a clinical trial as early as next year in which paramedics would give the protein to heart attack victims in the ambulance to provide heart cells with early protection.

Scientists who did not contribute to the experiment said the protein might work better and easier than trying to isolate and implant stem cells to repair the heart and restore its function.

Thyroxine also would not create the same political controversy as stem cell research.

Details of the mouse experiment appear in Thursday's issue of the journal Nature.

"This report provides a tantalizing clue toward a workable remedy for this prevailing cause of heart failure," said molecular biologist Michael D. Schneider of the Baylor College of Medicine in Houston, who reviewed the study for Nature.

In the experiment, research-

ers at the University of Texas Southwestern Medical Center in Dallas induced heart attacks in 58 mice by constricting blood flow in a major artery leading to the left ventricle, or the heart's primary pumping chamber.

Half of the mice were injected with a dose of thyroxine beta 4, while the rest received a placebo. Forty-five mice survived the procedure and their progress was monitored over a four-week period.

After a month, the mice treated with thyroxine showed 60 percent less heart muscle impairment in their hearts' ability to contract and pump blood. That's at least twice the improvement of the other mice, the Texas team reported.

The biggest gains in heart function occurred within one to three days of their "attacks," they said, while the other mice tended to get worse.

The thyroxine-treated mice also showed far less scar tissue in their hearts, indicating the treatment prevented death of heart muscle cells when they were deprived of oxygen, while levels of other protective immune molecules were increased.

The heart doesn't normally repair itself, that's one reason why heart attack victims tend to get weaker over time. But precisely how thyroxine works remains unclear.

Government approves new drug to treat multiple sclerosis

BY JAMIE TALAN
Newsday

The federal government has just approved a new medicine for multiple sclerosis that doctors say represents a new treatment approach that will significantly reduce the frequency of disabling episodes.

"This is great news," said Dr. Mark Gudesblatt, director of the MS Care Program at South Shore Neurological Associates in Bay Shore, N.Y. Symptoms of multiple sclerosis vary and wax and wane.

About half the 350,000 Americans with MS cannot take existing drugs, such as the beta-interferons, because of side effects.

This new medicine, initially called Antegren and renamed Tysabri, is a so-called monoclonal antibody that targets the immune system and stops the inflammatory process that is key to the disease. It is given monthly through an intravenous drip in a doctor's office.

"This is a completely new way to treat MS," Gudesblatt said. "If

you can hold the attacks down and keep the disabling symptoms away, people can live their lives."

In the most common form of MS, a worsening of neurologic function occurs intermittently.

There is growing scientific acceptance that MS is an autoimmune disorder. The immune system, which usually keeps the body safe from foreign organisms, attacks itself. With MS, the target is the brain and spinal cord.

Scientists at Biogen Idec of

Cambridge, Mass., and Elan Pharmaceuticals of Dublin, Ireland, teamed up to design a molecule that stops immune cells from traveling into the brain. When immune cells do get into the brain, there is an inflammatory response and this leads to the classic lesions observed in the MS-affected brain.

The FDA was so impressed with the drug's benefit to patients in a two-year multiple-center study that after the first year the approval process was accelerated. Even though the drug soon will be available by prescription, scientists

will continue to treat and follow patients in the studies.

In one study, scientists found the drug reduced the frequency of relapses by 66 percent compared with the placebo. In the second trial, patients taking the MS beta interferon drug Avonex added the experimental drug to their treatment. After a year, those on combination treatment had a significant reduction in relapses.

There were no serious side effects, and no patients died from infections, rashes, depression and gallstones.

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Snowbirds identified

FL GAINESVILLE — A new study shows the state is home to 920,000 "snowbirds," seasonal residents who flock to Florida during winter. They are usually from New York, over 55 and wealthier than retirees who reside in Florida year-round.

Florida, with a total permanent population of 17.5 million, has had difficulty counting its snowbirds; U.S. Census surveys don't consider the phenomenon of seasonal residents.

In the study by the University of Florida's Bureau of Economic and Business Research, New Yorkers accounted for 13.1 percent of Florida's temporary residents; Michigan accounted for 7.4 percent, Ohio 6.7 percent and Pennsylvania 5.8 percent. Canadians accounted for 1.6 percent.

The study also found that 35 percent of "snowbirds" had incomes of more than \$100,000.

Pardon long overdue

MA ROWLEY — It was 1963, Airman Richard Morse was 19, and he was in Florida, just a few hours away from being declared AWOL from his Air Force base in faraway Biloxi, Miss. When he saw a pink Cadillac with the keys in the ignition, he got in, and away he went.

That decision would land Morse in jail for five months after he ran out of town and was found by a police officer.

That record was erased earlier this month, when the government formally forgave the 61-year-old Morse for the transgression that hung over his head for so many years, though record otherwise remained spotless.

Then in 1998, Morse — an avid hunter — tried to buy his son a shotgun, and was refused, because of the Brady Bill, which flagged him for his criminal record.

So he set out to clear his name, getting character witnesses to fill out questionnaires. There were interviews with FBI agents.

Finally, this month, in a ceremony at the White House, President Bush pardoned Morse, along with two turkeys named Biscuits and Gravy. He got the news that morning.

Plastic bags may cost

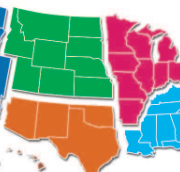
CA SAN FRANCISCO — City officials are considering charging grocery stores 17 cents each for grocery bags to discourage use of plastic sacks.

More than 90 percent of consumers choose plastic bags, which are blamed for everything from clogging recycling machines to killing marine life and suffocating infants. But the fee would also apply to paper bags to help reduce overall waste.

Promoting a healthy environment "means we need to help change people's patterns, and that even means their shopping patterns," said incoming city Supervisor Ross Mirkarimi, who takes office in January. "This is a sensible user fee."

Gun raffle for school

TX LAMPASAS — A local group is holding a school benefit raffle featuring a deer rifle, in hopes of raising enough money



AMERICAN ROUNDUP

to fence in a portion of a school in this central Texas town.

"We're moms using guns as tools to protect our kids," said Marta Ellison, a member of the Hanna Springs Intermediate School Parent-Teacher-Student Organization and part of the trio of mothers that put the raffle together. They've set out to raise about \$15,000.

"Bake sales are a thing of the past," she said.

Lampasas school Superintendent Carlton Tucker said he's gotten only one comment about the propriety of using guns to raise money for a school project.

House hits road

VT ROCKINGHAM — A one-story modular home skidded along the middle of Interstate 91, blocking traffic and leaving a trail of plywood splinters and styrofoam scraps in its dust.

The home, on its way north to a foundation in Lemster, N.H., was strapped to a Kenworth flatbed before dislodging at around 2 p.m. Monday near Exit 5, according to Vermont State Police.

"No one was hurt, fortunately. And we're still investigating the cause of the accident," Cpl. David Gerard said as he watched a crane and bucket loader push and lift the damaged home off the highway and onto a new flatbed.

Gerard said the driver of the tractor, Michael Luker, 46, told officers that he was traveling at 55 miles per hour when he felt a "wob-

bly herky-jerky pull" right before passing the exit ramp.

Once the home became detached, Gerard said its momentum sent it spinning approximately 500 feet forward on the highway, scraping violently against a west side guard rail as it crossed a Route 5 overpass.

Gerard said the only cars on the road at the time were two escort vehicles contracted to monitor the oversize load in transport.

9/11 coins ruled deceptive

NY ALBANY — A state judge ruled that a company's advertisements for a coin commemorating the Sept. 11 attacks were deceptive, state Attorney General Eliot Spitzer announced Tuesday.

The judge found that National Collector's Mint Inc. committed fraud, false advertising and deceptive business practices when it marketed its "2004 Freedom Tower Silver Dollar" for \$19.95 in television and print ads.

The company claimed the medallions were made of nearly pure silver recovered from Ground Zero in lower Manhattan. But Spitzer said they were made of inexpensive metal alloy plated with about one-tenth of an inch of silver.

Paddling outlawed

TX MEMPHIS — Memphis city schools will no longer allow paddling as a disciplinary measure.

In a 5-4 vote Monday night, the board of the 118,000-student system decided instead to consider alternative disciplinary plans.

"The real work begins now," said Schools Superintendent Carol Johnson, who proposed a "Blue Ribbon Behavior Initiative" that includes a behavior and social skills curriculum, and sanctions for unruly students including Saturday school, community service and loss of sports-participation privileges.

Memphis is the largest school system in Tennessee and the 18th largest in the nation. According to the National Coalition to Abolish Corporal Punishment in Schools 2004 study of the nation's 100 largest school systems, Memphis was one of only nine that still allow paddling.

Suit alleges death faked

TX HOUSTON — A lawsuit is accusing a bank and 24 other businesses and individuals of helping a Clear Lake man in a \$7 million fraud scheme.

Larry Michael Nixon, 55, has been accused of faking his own death. The man known for his parties and big spending disappeared after his speedboat, "Living Extra Fast," smashed into a barge in August 2003 in the Houston Ship Channel. He was found alive in January in a house in the North Texas town of Weatherford.

The lawsuit was filed Friday by Old National Bank of Evansville, Ind., and Mt. Gene Martin of Greenwood, Ind., a former partner of Nixon.

It accuses Moody National Bank and Michael Hazelwood, vice president and loan officer at its Clear Lake branch, of conspiring with Nixon to obtain loans to buy nonexistent cranes.



Beef on the hoof

Cattle graze on Jay Robinson's ranch in Clovis, Calif. After several lean years, California cattle ranchers are enjoying their second consecutive year of record beef prices.



Tiny Claus

6-month-old Lindsey Mann is pushed along Main Street by her grandmother Lucy Ywarsky during the Jewett City Snowflake Parade in Griswold, Conn. Mann won 1st place in her category.



Foggy fishing

The fog didn't stop these men from fishing at Cedar Creek Lake near Crab Orchard, KY.



Twice the fun

Bon-Macy's visual staff workers Chris Sisneros, top, and Carol Mosher are reflected in store windows as they climb ladders to apply red-ribbon decals to store windows in downtown Seattle.



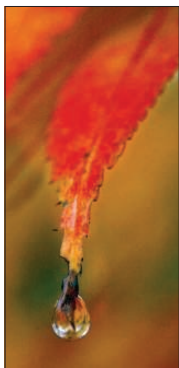
Sailing away

Members of the University of Wisconsin-Madison Hoofers Sailing Club get in one last race on a nice Sunday afternoon before winter sets in for good.



Let there be lights

Keith Calicott with the Jackson County, Mo., Parks and Recreation Dept. sets up one of the light displays in preparation for the annual Christmas in The Park at Longview Lake in Lee's Summit, Mo. The display opens with more than 100 singers and dancers performing and a fireworks display.



Hanging on

A single raindrop clings to the tip of a leaf of a Japanese maple tree in between rain showers in Birmingham, Ala.



Near miss

A cedar tree lays across Wayside Drive in Austin, Texas, after falling in heavy rains. The tree narrowly missed a parked SUV as it fell.

Whale's diet revealed

AK ANCHORAGE — A Prince William Sound killer whale that washed up dead on Latouche Island in 2003 had scarfed down at least five sea otters — plus 1,000 seabird feathers, bits of seaweed and about nine pounds of rocks.

The belly of the big male, from a unique population in sharp decline, also contained parts of nine harbor seals, some river-otter teeth, a sliver of a clam's siphon and an octopus's beak, according to Lori Quakenbush, a biologist with the state's Arctic Marine Mammal Program.

The analysis, summarized in a recent report, gave scientists a rare chance to catalog exactly what one of the ocean's top predators had to eat.

It marked the first time sea-otter remains had been documented inside a killer whale's stomach, according to biologists.

Lawmakers need space

IA DES MOINES — Officials are trying to find additional work space for a Senate that's split 25-25 among Democrats and Republicans.

The tie means the two parties get equal staff, equal office space and equal status. That's not always easy to arrange and, in some cases, long planned Statehouse renovation may be put on hold.

Libraries protect kids

FL ORLANDO — Libraries in Orange County have barred unaccompanied adults from lingering in the children's areas of its 14 branches, a policy that is among the first of its kind in the nation.

Since Nov. 1, adults without children may select items in the children's section, but they cannot read books or loiter in the department, said Marilyn Hoffman, community-relations coordinator.

Officials with the Association for Library Service to Children said many libraries limit adults' use of computers or bathrooms in the children's departments, but Orange County's policy could be the first in the nation to restrict adults' presence in the areas.

Although Hoffman said no specific incident led to the new rules, Orlando police arrested a man in August after a 15-year-old girl said he tried to molest her at the downtown library.

Law limits scooters

MA BOSTON — A bill that restricts the use of motorized scooters was approved by state lawmakers Wednesday and sent to Gov. Mitt Romney for his signature.

The proposed law requires scooter operators to hold a valid driver's license or permit and wear a helmet. It also mandates the scooters be driven during daylight hours at no more than 20 miles per hour and requires they be equipped with turn signals. Drivers must also obey all traffic laws and stay off sidewalks.

The new law would cover all types of scooters, from motorized skateboards to 2-foot miniature motorcycles and motorized tricycles.

Bus drivers go hunting

WV MORGANTOWN — Hundreds of schoolchildren were forced to find a ride or miss classes Tuesday when bus drivers skipped their routes to go deer hunting for the second straight day.

Jake Mullet, assistant superintendent of Monongalia County schools, said the problem was not as severe as Monday, when transportation officials were unable to find substitute drivers for 10 buses and children on those routes were stranded.

On Tuesday, only six routes were unaffected, affecting about 600 children.

Twenty-one drivers did not show up Monday, Mullet said, "but contrary to published reports, only one failed to notify us."

Mullet said school officials will meet with the drivers, and disciplinary action including suspension is possible.

Chicago to warn, then tow

IL CHICAGO — The city of Chicago is changing its towing program following complaints from car owners who say they weren't given enough notice before their cars were sold. Chicago will now give vehicle owners 21 days, up from 15, to reclaim towed cars and allow them to request 15-day extensions. The city also will expand the use of payment plans for tickets, fines and fees.

Hero becomes suspect

UT SALT LAKE CITY — Two weeks ago, Michael Wayne Wald was a hero as he rescued his wife, two young children and the family dog from their burning second-story apartment.

Now, Wald has been charged with setting the blaze that endangered the lives of everyone living in the eight-unit complex.

Wald, 38, was charged Monday with first-degree felony aggravated arson, punishable by up to life in prison. He has become a suspect in two other fires that are now being reinvestigated — an apartment fire and a delivery-van fire. Both occurred within the past two years, according to authorities.

Professors unionize

WA CHENEY — Eastern Washington University professors voted overwhelmingly in favor of forming a union that will represent full- and part-time faculty in collective bargaining with the administration. Central Washington University faculty were the first in the state to take advantage of a new collective-bargaining law for colleges. Professors at Western Washington University also are organizing a union.

Tuition increase

WY CHEYENNE — The Wyoming Community College Commission approved a tuition hike of about 4 percent at the state's seven community colleges. Under the new rates, effective in the 2005-06 school year, a full-time student who is a Wyoming resident will pay \$684 a semester, up from \$660. Full-time nonresidents will now pay \$2,064 a semester, up from \$1,980.

Stories and photos from wire services

FACES

Incubus singer fined for weapon

Incubus' lead singer pleaded guilty in New York to disorderly conduct and was fined \$250 for carrying a switchblade in his bag while trying to board a plane.

Brandon Boyd, 28, said Tuesday he bought the switchblade while he was in Amsterdam and brought it back in his suitcase. Later on, he went camping with his family and brought the blade with him in his toiletry bag and forgot about it.

"I had finally found a use for it: Camping," he said. "I totally forgot about it in my bag."

Boyd was stopped U.S. Airways terminal at LaGuardia Airport when baggage screeners spotted the knife in his carry-on luggage.

Boyd was charged with criminal possession of weapon and was released after four hours in a holding cell. The charges were later reduced.



Boyd

Military families get a cruise

For relatives and friends of U.S. troops serving in Iraq, "The Ellen DeGeneres Show" was the place to be.

Studio audience members, all with a military connection, were surprised with the gift of a free cruise at a taping Tuesday. The episode of the syndicated talk show, with guest Tom Hanks, aired Wednesday.

A total of 250 seven-day cruises for four, along with taxes and fees, were given in appreciation of troops deployed from three California bases: Marine Corps Air Station Miramar, Camp Pendleton and Fort Vic.

Celebrity Cruises is providing the vacations, available at any time to allow for troops overseas to take part on their return, according to a spokeswoman for the show.

DeGeneres also joined with the USO to send more than 5,000 care packages to the audience's relatives and friends in Iraq. The episode will be repeated on Thanksgiving on the Armed Forces Network.

2 Live Crew concert causes controversy

A beer garden that usually hosts polka bands may get fined after a raunchy performance by 2 Live Crew.

The Nov. 18 rap concert, which featured explicit lyrics, partially nude lap dancing and simulated sex acts, was attended by undercover agents from the California Department of Alcohol and Beverage Control, The Sonoma Valley Sun reported.

The agency may fine the owners of Little Switzerland, which advertises itself as a 1920s style European beer hall, or suspend its alcohol license, according to investigator Scott Warnock.

The 2 Live Crew was not specifically targeted, Warnock said.

A show scheduled in nearby Guerneville for Nov. 20 was canceled after the Little Switzerland incident.

The beer hall's owners, Antonio and Alina Garcia, were unavailable for comment.

Waits hits stage in London

Offbeat rocker-actor Tom Waits returned to the British stage Tuesday for the first time since 1987.

The 3,000-capacity Carling Hammersmith Apollo sold out in 20 minutes when tickets went on sale for the only British date on his European tour promoting his new "cubist funk" album "Real Gone."

Music stars including Thom Yorke, Beth Orton and Jamie Cullum were in the crowd to see Waits perform new material, as well as old favorites from his 30-year career.

The audience seemed to relish Waits' unique gravelly singing voice.

Making fun of his long absence from London and his own age, the 54-year-old singer said: "It's good to see you."

"OK, all right, yeah, 17 years ... but you look good. The three ages of man: youth, middle age and you look good."



Waits

Stories and photos from The Associated Press

'What doesn't kill you ...'

Ja Rule has taken on 50 Cent and the Feds, now he's back to doing what he does best

BY JIM FARBBER

New York Daily News

Don't cry for Ja Rule.

Yes, the rapper has experienced the kind of year that could make Bill O'Reilly's look envious. But he insists, "I wasn't out somewhere whining and crying. I just had to make sense of it all. I really didn't understand what came at me."

Especially since it came from so many different directions.

In 2003, this one-time hip-hop giant — who racked up four multiplatinum albums between 1999 and 2002 — found himself embroiled in the biggest beef this side of Peter Luger. In interviews, mix tapes and official releases, he battled it out with 50 Cent, then the top new rapper around.

And he was losing badly.

In February 2003, 50 humiliated Rule on the fastest selling CD of the year, "Get Rich or Die Tryin'." It labeled Rule a fake gangsta who had imitated Tupac Shakur, and who sold out rap by turning it into pop. Powerful associates of 50, including Eminem, Dr. Dre and his G-Unit posse, also ripped into Rule.

Last November, the embattled rapper finally fired back with his own album of barbs, "Blood in My Eye." On one track, Rule vowed to "go to jail for sending 50 to hell."

But the album became the rapper's first commercial disappointment, selling fewer than 50,000 copies.

At the same time federal agents began an ongoing investigation into Murder Inc., the record company that launched Rule. It accused the label of being funded by drug money.

Then rumors began to swirl that Rule was splitting with his wife.

The two, who married four years ago, have known each other since high school in Hollis, Queens, when Rule was known as Jeffrey Atkins. They have three children, ages 1, 3 and 9.

By early 2004, Rule admits when he'd "go out in the streets, it was 'f--- you' [from the fans]."

He asserts it all came about because the fans "were misled. They were told lies and they believed them."

Now Rule is trying to set the record straight and revive his badly wounded career with a new album, "R.U.L.E.," which hits stores Nov. 9.

On the CD, Rule, 28, deals with all his struggles.

"I poured out my soul," he says. But he tried not to increase the anger.

"I want [fans] to focus on the artist and the music and not the hoopla that tends to distract people," he says.

The music returns Rule to his hit-making style, with more R&B elements provided by singers like Ashanti, Lloyd and R. Kelly. It contrasts dramatically with last year's hard-core "Blood" album.

Rule says he got the anger out of his system on that CD. But certain events surrounding its release drew criticism.

Rule issued "Blood" one day after giving a highly publicized interview with Minister Louis Farrakhan that was meant to deflate the escalating beef between him and 50. Fans heard only encouraging words from Rule in the interview, but the rapper says he did vent during it.

"They spiced it up," he explains. "In the minister's defense, they said that because he thought it was better for hip hop to show no negativity."

50 Cent didn't show up for his half of the powwow, which Rule says "was disrespectful to the minister, and to hip hop." But many hip-hop fans wound up blaming Rule for participating in a peace talk one day, then putting out a war-mongering album the next.

They called the whole Farrakhan talk a PR stunt.

"I never said [the interview] wasn't meant for promotion," Rule says.

He also feels it's hypocritical for listeners to accuse him of watering down hip hop when they made hits of the songs in question.

"Now everyone is doing that style," Rule says. "They're riding the formula."

As for his label's troubles, Rule says its workers have had a hard time dealing with them. Last year, the company changed its name from Murder Inc. to The Inc.

Rule claims the switch was not a reaction to the investigation.

"We're not kids on the block anymore," he explains.

"We're a company with corporate sponsors that don't like having 'Murder' on their letterheads."

Though The Inc. remained firmly on Rule's side behind the scenes, in public he toughed out his problems alone. Some loyal fans wondered why no other rappers came to his defense. Rule claims some wanted to, but he told them, "I'm going to do this as a lone soldier, to make an even stronger statement about myself."

Rule claims the public's attitude toward him also is turning around. He even claims this brutal year had its good side.

"It made me a better artist," he says. "Everybody needs an adversary. What doesn't kill you will only make you stronger."



R&B



EUROPEAN FORECAST

Benelux: Partly to mostly cloudy throughout the day with rain showers in the afternoon. Highs in the upper 40s to lower 50s.

Britain, Ireland: Mostly cloudy with pockets of fog in the morning becoming partly cloudy in the afternoon. Highs in the upper 40s to mid 50s.

Croatia and Bosnia: Day: Highs in the mid-30s.

France: Partly to mostly cloudy throughout the day, afternoon rain showers in the north. Highs in the mid 50s. Saturday lows in the mid 40s. South coast highs in the mid 60s.

Northern Germany: Mostly cloudy to cloudy throughout the day with rain showers late. Highs in the 40s.

Southern Germany: Partly to mostly cloudy in the morning becoming mostly cloudy in the afternoon with isolated rain showers late. Highs in the 40s.

Hungary: Cloudy with snow showers in the morning becoming partly cloudy in the evening. Highs in the 40s.

Northern Italy: Partly to mostly cloudy throughout the day. Highs in the low 40s to low 50s.

Southern Italy: Partly cloudy throughout the day. Highs in the 30s.

Kosovo: Partly cloudy throughout the day. Highs in the 30s.

Norway: Cloudy with rain showers on the south west coastal area and rain showers inland. Inland highs in the upper 20s to low 30s, Saturday lows in the mid teens. South west coast, high in the 40s.

Portugal, Spain: Inland, mostly cloudy becoming partly cloudy in the evening. South and west coast, partly cloudy throughout the day. Inland, highs in the 50s.

Turkey: Partly to mostly cloudy with isolated rain showers in the morning becoming partly cloudy in the afternoon, with isolated thunderstorms in the east. Highs in the mid 40s to upper 50s.



AFRICA

Capa Town	76	62	Mogadishu	84	70
Dakar	74	60	Nairobi	80	77
Freeport	76	62	Rabat	69	51
Kinshasa	83	72	Tripoli	68	48

THE WORLD

Amsterdam	51	44	Manila	88	79
Bahrain	79	69	Mexico City	73	64
Beijing	46	28	Montreal	46	27
Bombay	84	74	Riyadh	46	27
Bermuda	74	68	San Jose	91	78
Buenos Aires	68	58	Sao Paulo	91	78
Calcutta	78	61	Sofia	41	25
Chengdu	71	60	Sydney	79	66
Hong Kong	83	72	Tokyo	62	54

TODAY'S STATESIDE OUTLOOK

Alaska	70	46	Idaho	42	28
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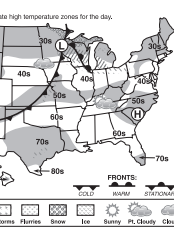
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THE UNITED STATES TODAY

As of noon, Eastern U.S. time



Scheduled by **ETS** or **PCS**?

Check our Relocation Guide every Saturday to find Realtors at your new station.

STARS AND STRIPES
Your Hometown Newspaper

Horoscope

The full moon in Gemini inspires an atmosphere that's witty and charming with a perfect blend of sass and fun. Social interaction is injected with goodness and bright communication. Mental expansion is the goal. The danger is in revealing too much or getting into conversations that are really over our heads. But how else are we to learn?

TODAY'S BIRTHDAY (November 26). You allow yourself to be guided toward success this year, realizing that resistance is futile. Reunite with a loved one next month, and you can let old baggage drop. Too. February brings a solid relationship with someone who shares your love of adventure. A breakthrough in your work helps you get out of debt in March. Leo and Capricorn are favored.

ARIES (March 21-April 19). You're not required to know it all, but do take hold of your own mission. This inspires confidence from your team. By the way, taking a day trip in a group of more than four is not advised, as it's too chaotic and exhausting.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20). Life challenges you to be the leader. If you're responsible for others, they're really studying you now. Moms and dads need to consult one another in order to present children with a united front.

GEMINI (May 21-June 21). You don't have to win the prize to learn the lesson. But in order to get an "A" for effort, you must show plenty of enthusiasm and willingness. Relationships have the potential to be too exciting! Retreat from the drama.

CANCER (June 22-July 22). The thing about hanging around flirty people is, as irritating as they can be, they often spark something by telling the truth. What was unconscious becomes conscious. Mull over your realizations privately.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22). You'll be wrapped up in the business of making everyone feel at home.

Don't be tricked into thinking you've got to spend a lot to get it all. Everything can be kept to a reasonable budget with a little ingenuity.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22). When you feel marvelous, you act marvelous, and that's just what the impressionable people around you need to see right now. Examples of how to live life in a celebratory way are few and far between.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 23). Someone has started a job and left it for you to finish! It's annoying — until you realize that all this taking care of business makes you dead attractive! All the attention you're getting fluffs your ego.

SCORPIO (Oct. 24-Nov. 21). The smart, creative people claim you as one of their own. If you've been sitting on an idea, get off of it today. Let it go, or make it happen. Lucky connections with a Cancer or Pisces will speed things along.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21). Potential partners — for companionship, business or love — abound. However, you may be too sluggish and sleepy to notice. Physical exercise will help set you back to high-functioning mode.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19). Matters of commerce get your energy up, and you'll be driven to find the best deal. Strong hunches lead you to the right doors. When someone younger gives you his or her admiration, be gentle with the gift.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18). There are probably better things to do with your time than to pursue elusive love — but somehow, those other things just don't seem as fun. Your passionate nature is stirred up by anything you can't have.

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20). You're not exactly in an easy-to-please mood. You crave the more expensive luxuries such as fine dining, dancing and entertainment. However, something as inexpensive as a bubble bath is a decadent, heavenly event.

Creators Syndicate

Holiday Mathis

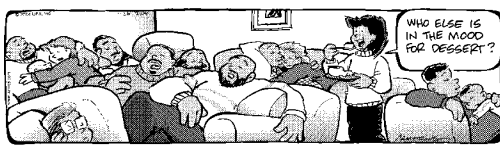


the attention you're getting fluffs your ego.

Calvin and Hobbes



Jump Start



Zits



Cathy



Hi and Lois



Beetle Bailey



Red and Rover



Better or Worse



Peanuts



Snooping kid creates problem

Dear Abby: I'm a single mother, raising a 14-year-old daughter, "Cheryl." Recently, Cheryl has started going through my things while I am not at home. A couple of times she has found things of a sexual nature — pictures and marital aids — that I had thought were well hidden.

How do I address these matters without discussing the content in depth? We have discussions about a lot of things, but I must admit I'm embarrassed about this.

However, I want to discuss this with Cheryl before she tells someone about what she found and gets misinformation.

— **Blushing in Chicago**
Dear Blushing: Your daughter is old enough to understand the concept of privacy — and that includes not going through your things without permission, or discussing your private life with her contemporaries. Since you

Dear Abby



now know what she does in your absence, keep your personal items under lock and key.

If Cheryl questions you about the items she finds, explain to her that there are sometimes used by adults. If she wants to know more, answer her questions honestly. And while you're at it, be sure your daughter knows that if she has further questions in the future, she's welcome to come to you.

Dear Abby: I'm having trouble dealing with my Aunt "Marge." She disapproves of the fact that my husband, "Keith," is 40 and I'm 33. Aunt Marge says I should have married someone my age — or no more than a year or two ago — because SHE likes men her own age.

Keith earns enough so that I can stay at home with our two children. Aunt Marge says I'm selfish to make him carry the financial burden alone. (Neither

Keith nor I feel there's anything selfish about it.)

Aunt Marge stops by unexpectedly a lot, usually at night. If I'm wearing my robe and nightgown, she demands to know why. Then she asks why I took my shower so long before bedtime. She also constantly criticizes the way I wear my hair.

Abby, she's a good person in other ways, but she has always had a habit of criticizing and being too quick to judge. Do Keith and I have reason to be offended, or should we just accept that she is who she is, ignore her, and not say anything?

— **Getting Fed Up in California**
Dear Fed Up: If no one has pointed out to Aunt Marge that it's rude to drop by unannounced and give unsolicited advice about personal grooming, now is the time. It won't change her, but perhaps it will cause her to stop for a moment and think.

Letters for this column — with your name and address — should be addressed to Dear Abby, P.O. Box 6940, Los Angeles 90069. Readers can write to Abby on the Internet at <http://www.uspspress.com/dearabby>. Universal Press Syndicate

JUMBLE

Unscramble these four Jumbles, one letter to each square, to form four ordinary words.

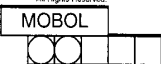
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A: A

Yesterday's

Jumbles: QUEUE LINEN CLOVEN JINGLE

Answer: When the fiddler was shown a dirty hotel room, he called it a — VILE INN

THAT SCRAMBLED WORD GAME

by Henri Arnold and Mike Argiron



WHAT THE HEAVY-SET DINERS HAD AT THE RESTAURANT.

Now arrange the circled letters to form the surprise answer, as suggested by the above cartoon.

(Answers tomorrow)

No intimacy with older husband

Dear Annie: Thirty years ago, when I married my husband, "Jeff," I couldn't foresee any major problems with marrying a man who was 25 years older. I was then 26, and he was 51. Now I am 56 and Jeff is 81.

After completely ignoring me sexually for the past 15 years, Jeff suddenly announced that he is unhappy. The main cause of his complaint is our complete lack of physical intimacy.

I'd like to know what sand pile Jeff has had his head in all this time. I reminded him that I begged him to go to marriage counseling 15 years ago when he became impotent after prostate surgery.

Until impotency curtailed his activities, Jeff also was quite a skirt chaser. There have been times when I've been ready to throw him out. I care for Jeff, but no longer in any romantic way. In the meantime, I am very lonely.

— **Loveless in Louisiana**

Dear Louisiana: One or two.

Annie's Mailbox



Jeff is 81. Is there any possibility that his recent demands are due to incipient dementia or physical problems? He might benefit from a complete checkup. Second, please consider counseling for YOU. It would be useful if Jeff came with, but it is not an absolute necessity. Marriage includes a promise to make every effort to get through the rough times.

Dear Annie: I can't believe defended "Montana Woman," who complained that older men have too much hair.

As a 75-year-old man, I have to defend our naturally occurring excess ear hair. First of all, I am not going to start poking scissors into my ears to deal with the problem, and my wife can't help because she has carpal tunnel syndrome and can't even handle a pencil. I do make feeble attempts with the pop-up trimmer on my electric razor, but my eyes are not

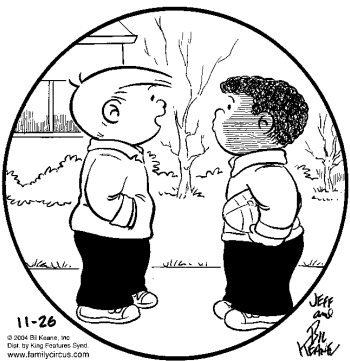
good enough to see what I am doing. So my ears have to wait to be trimmed by my barber when he trims my eyebrows and nose hairs. This I do on a monthly basis when my hair needs cutting, but at \$25 a pop, I'm not going to do it more frequently.

— **Bill from Connecticut**
Dear Bill: A lot of hairy men (and women who care about the subject) wrote to us about this. Here are two views:

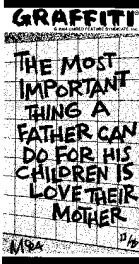
From Round Rock, Texas: I read your column every single day and had to comment. As a 46-year-old man, I am lucky not to have nose hair, but I do have ear hair. There is not a gizmo made that removes ear hair without pulling, yanking or tearing it by the roots. Believe me, I've tried everything. Thank God my wife thinks the small amount of hair bordering my ears is sexy. I'm lucky to have her.

Annie's Mailbox is written by Kathy Mitchell and Marcy Sugar, longtime editors of the Ann Landers column. Please e-mail your questions to anniesmailbox@comcast.net, or write to: Annie's Mailbox, c/o Creators Syndicate, 5777 W. Century Blvd., Suite 700, Los Angeles, CA 90045. Creators Syndicate

Family Circus



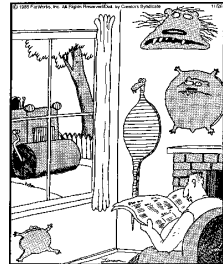
"I was REALLY thankful yesterday. I didn't have to eat dinner at the card table."



Domis the Menace



The Far Side



Non Sequitur



Bucs, A's close on Kendall

BY RONALD BLUM
The Associated Press

NEW YORK — All-Star catcher Jason Kendall would go from the Pittsburgh Pirates to the Oakland Athletics for left-handers Mark Redman and Arthur Rhodes in a trade that was close to being finalized Wednesday.

A baseball official, speaking on condition of anonymity, said the deal was near completion. And Kendall's agent informed Pirates general manager Dave Littlefield that the 30-year-old California native would waive his no-trade clause to play for the A's, a person close to Kendall said, also on condition of anonymity.

Danilo Miller, who caught for Oakland last season, was in Milwaukee for a news conference to announce his \$8.75 million, three-year contract with the Brewers. He took a physical, and the news conference was canceled because Milwaukee's team doctors had scattered for the Thanksgiving holidays, and weren't available to read the results of an MRI exam on his right shoulder.

"I can't tell you whether he's failed or passed the physical," general manager Doug Melvin said, "because we haven't finished the evaluation."

In other free-agent news, closer Bob Wickman decided to stay with the Cleveland Indians, agreeing to a \$2.75 million, one-year



contract. And the Minnesota Twins got a veteran to back up Joe Mauer, agreeing to a \$1.8 million, two-year contract with catcher Mike Redmond.

In a minor trade of outfielders, the Pirates acquired Antonio Sucre from the soon-to-be Washington Nationals for J.J. Davis.

Kendall, an All-Star in 1996, 1998 and 2000, hit .219 with three homers and 51 RBIs last season. He is due to make \$10 million in 2005, \$11 million in 2006 and \$13 million in 2007, the final three seasons of the \$60 million deal he signed in 2001. The sides were discussing how much of the deal Pittsburgh would assume, the official said.

Redman went 11-12 with a 4.71 ERA and Rhodes was 3-3 with nine saves and a 5.12 ERA for Oakland last season.

Miller would be an upgrade offensively and defensively for Milwaukee, which got a combined .215 batting average with eight home runs and 47 RBIs out of Chad Moeller and Gary Bennett last season.

A native of West Salem, Wis., Miller hit .272 with 25 doubles, nine home runs and 58 RBIs in

110 games with Oakland, and committed only one error in 751 chances.

"With the Thanksgiving holiday, our team doctors are spread all over the place. One's on an airplane," Melvin said. "We still may be able to sign Danilo Miller. We just don't want to jump in until we've finished our medical evaluation. We hoped to announce the deal. We just ran out of time."

Wickman, who missed 2003 following reconstructive elbow surgery, returned to the Indians in July and went 0-2 with a 4.25 ERA in 30 appearances, finishing strongly. The 35-year-old right-hander converted his last 12 save chances.

Having filled one of their biggest needs, the Indians are now expected to pursue a quality starter. Matt Clement, Jon Lieber, Russ Ortiz and Matt Morris are among those drawing interest.

"Certainly, this should give us the ability to be aggressive in the starting market," general manager Mark Shapiro said.

Redmond, who played the past six-plus seasons with Florida, batted .256 with 15 doubles, two homers and 25 RBIs in 246 at-bats last year. The Twins are no longer interested in Henry Blanco, who filled in capably at the position when Mauer tore cartilage in his left knee — and wound up playing in just 35 games when recovery from surgery took much longer than expected.

Dodgers, Tracy agree on two-year contract

The Associated Press

LOS ANGELES — Los Angeles Dodgers manager Jim Tracy agreed Wednesday to a two-year contract following negotiations that took longer than expected.

After Tracy guided the Dodgers to their first playoff berth since 1996, general manager Paul DePodesta said he hoped an agreement would be in place before baseball's general managers meetings began Nov. 9.

"Regardless of how long it takes, the most important thing is you end up with something that both sides can live with," Tracy said Wednesday during a conference call. "I think that's where we got to. However long it takes to get it done, so be it."

"I didn't really feel like it was ever going to be a situation where I wouldn't be manager of the Dodgers. To me, it's now behind us and I'm looking forward to the job in front of us and the task at hand."

Tracy said he was satisfied with the agreement, adding that agent Alan Hendricks felt good about the heady parties made in the past few days.

"They moved a little bit," Tracy said. "They moved far enough for me to feel like this is theirs. I want to be, this is where I should be at this time in my managerial career. Everyone is happy on both ends. I was very confi-

dent we would find a middle ground that both sides could live with."

Tracy's previous deal expired at the end of October.

The Dodgers had been the only major league team without a manager under contract.

"It never got contentious or anything like that," DePodesta said. "It really ended up just being a normal course of negotiation. Jim wanted to be here, we wanted to have him back. We just felt like it was a matter of time. No one felt like there was a sense of urgency."

DePodesta said he told Tracy in August he wanted him to return as manager.

"I didn't want Jim worrying about it down the stretch," DePodesta said. "I just wanted to get the start of it all. Everybody expected that at some point we would get it done."

The Dodgers were 356-292 during Tracy's first four years, including 93-69 last season, their best record since 1991. They lost to NL champion St. Louis 1-1 in the first round of the playoffs.

"I feel like we've done some tremendous things over the last four years," Tracy said. "There's more to be done, there are more mountains to climb."

Tracy hopes his coaching staff returns to the clubhouse. He added that bench coach Jim Riggleman might not be back because of other opportunities.

Russia advances to Fed Cup final against France

The Associated Press

MOSCOW — French Open champion Anastasia Myskina and U.S. Open winner Svetlana Kuznetsova won singles matches Thursday, sending Russia past Austria and into the Fed Cup final against defending champion France.

Myskina rallied past Yvonne Meusburger 3-6, 6-3, 6-1 to give Russia an unbeatable 3-0 lead in the best-of-five semifinal.

Kuznetsova then routed Daniela Kix 6-1, 6-1. France swept Spain 5-0 behind singles victories by Nathalie Dechy and Tatiana Golovin. Dechy put the French ahead 3-0, defeating Anabel Medina Garrigues 6-3, 6-1. Golovin then stopped Maria Marrero 6-3, 6-4 and the doubles team of Marion Bartoli and Emelie Lot dove Marrero and Virginia Ruano Pascual 7-5, 6-2.

"It's the best result we could imagine," Dechy said. "We won all the matches in straight sets but didn't spend much time on the court. It's a good preparation for the final."

France beat Russia in the semifinals in Moscow last season.

France will be playing in its third final, having won the previous two. Russia is in the fifth final but has never won.

The Russian team faces a delicate matter after Myskina said she will quit the Fed Cup squad if Maria Sharapova joins the squad next year. Myskina says she



Russian's Anastasia Myskina hits a return during Thursday's 3-6, 6-3, 6-1 victory over Austria's Yvonne Meusburger in their Fed Cup match.

doesn't like the Wimbledon champion's father.

Sharapova has never played for the team, and wasn't invited because of her tight calendar, captain Shamil Tarpishev said.

Myskina said her problem was with Sharapova's father and coach, Yuri.

"I feel his behavior is totally incorrect, simply rude. I don't want to be around people like him," Myskina said.

Barnes leads Australian Open

SYDNEY, Australia — Kurt Barnes held a two-stroke lead Thursday, after shooting a 6-under-par 65 in the first round of the 100th Australian Open.

Fellow Australians Greg Chalmers, Richard Green and Rod Pampling opened with 67s at The Australian Golf Club, the site of the inaugural tournament in 1904.

Barnes, the 23-year-old son of a

coal miner, had nine birdies, a bogey and a double-bogey on the par-4 third.

"You can't think this game too serious, otherwise you go insane," Barnes said.

Two-time champion Aaron Baddeley was three strokes back along with fellow Aussies Stuart Appleby and Anthony Gilligan and Colombia's Camilo Villegas.

Baddeley, who made a 25-foot eagle putt on the par-5 fifth, won as an amateur in 1999 at Royal Sydney and retained the title as a pro in 2000 at Kingston Heath.

Corey Pavin, the 1995 U.S. Open champion, shot a 73. Fellow Americans Bob Estes and John Morse also had 73s, and former U.S. Amateur champion Ricky Barnes shot a 77.

Police inspect Turin 2006 documents

TURIN, Italy — Police inspected documents at the headquarters of the organizing committee of the 2006 Winter Olympics on Thursday as part of an investigation into possible financial irregularities.

Organizing chief Valentino Castellani said his committee, known as TOROC, has acted "in full observance of the law" and was not being accused of wrongdoing.

The action came while Castellani was in Lausanne, Switzerland, for a progress report to the International Olympic Committee. TOROC and Italian authorities sought to play down initial reports the committee's offices were raided.

Investigators said they exam-

ined documents regarding TOROC's bookkeeping, and also confirmed that for now there was no accusation of any criminal offense.

Police also inspected documents at the Rome offices of Italy's national Olympic committee as well as at its regional office in Turin.

"Offices have not been searched, nor has there been any seizure," the committee said, describing the request to see the documents as "absolutely normal."

Purdy leads in Korea

JEJU, South Korea — PGA Tour player Ted Purdy shot a 7-under 65 on Thursday to take a one-stroke lead over Ireland's Padraig Harrington and South Korea's Yang Yong-eun after the first round of the Shinhua Korea Golf Championship.

Purdy, a playoff loser this year in the MCI Heritage, also finished second in the B.C. Open, had seven birdies in a bogey-free round in windy conditions on the Jeju Island course.

Harrington had two eagles, three birdies and a bogey.

Tom Pernice Jr. and Brian Berman opened with 68s, and 2002 PGA champion Rich Beem was another stroke back in the first PGA Tour-sanctioned Challenge Season event in Asia. Mark Calcavecchia, Tiger Immelman and European Ryder Cup player Miguel Angel Jimenez topped a group at 70, Nick Faldo opened with a 68, and South Korean star K.J. Choi shot a front-nine 42 en route to a 76.

RACING STRIPES

A WEEKLY LOOK AT MOTORSPORTS

NASCAR shifted gears in 2004

Playoff format brought new level of drama to Nextel Cup

BY JENNA FRYER
The Associated Press

CHARLOTTE, N.C. — The most popular driver opened the year with a win in the biggest race of them all, and the most hated driver closed the season by taking home the only trophy that really matters.

Somewhere between Dale Earnhardt Jr.'s victory at the season-opening Daytona 500 and Kurt Busch's championship-winning performance in the finale, a new era began for NASCAR.

The 2004 season was one of radical changes: First-year chairman Brian France introduced a new series sponsor and a playoff-structured new points system, and he continued to push his sport to the West Coast by shifting races out of the South.

It was also a season of sadness: Rick Hendrick, one of the most powerful car owners in NASCAR, lost friends, family and employment when his company plane crashed en route to an Oct. 24 race, killing all 10 aboard.

The tragedy marked what should have been one of the most successful seasons in NASCAR history. The points race was the closest ever and wasn't decided until the last lap of Sunday's race at Homestead-Miami Speedway.

But when Jeff Gordon and Jimmie Johnson failed to give Hendrick the title, it was impossible to mask the disappointment felt across the garage.

"It put a whole different meaning on the championship for us. We wanted it for Hendrick Motorsports," said Gordon, who finished third in the standings. "We knew how much it would mean for us to stand up at that stage in New York and honor those guys as champions. Jimmie's myself, which ever one could get it done."

"It's a disappointment no matter what, knowing that we had an opportunity to do something really special like that."

In the end, Busch beat Johnson for the title by eight points. Gordon was 16 back.

It wasn't a popular ending, with Busch, the series outcast, hoisting the first Nextel Cup trophy.

Busch doesn't really fit in with his rivals — he looks as if he should be playing with a chemistry set, not wrestling with a 3,400-pound stock car — and he has a propensity to use big words, albeit incorrectly. That's made him somewhat of a misfit throughout the garage.



Kurt Busch, often the target of jeers from NASCAR fans, proved his detractors wrong by winning the Nextel Cup championship.

But mostly, Busch isn't Junior.

The overwhelming fan favorite, Earnhardt gave his supporters hope this would be the year he would win his first championship. He won the Daytona 500 — the one race his late father truly cherished — in dominating fashion.

The next nine months didn't go as well for him:

■ He admitted intentionally spinning at Bristol to get a caution that would help his struggling car.

■ He was seriously burned

"This year has been one of the better years for competing for a championship. ... There are more positives than negatives."

Jimmie Johnson
Nextel Cup runner-up

when he crashed a sports car in an extracurricular event that caused him to lose ground in the points race.

■ He cursed in a Victory Lane interview at Talladega in October, costing him 25 points and creating an uproar over NASCAR's off-track policing.

In the end, it was all too much to overcome, and Earnhardt finished a distant fifth in the standings.

Fans were angered by that, too. Under the former points system, used for more than two decades, Junior would have finished third, behind Gordon and Johnson.

But after years of ho-hum

points races, France overhauled the system and created a 10-driver, 10-race playoff. Fans hated what they considered manufactured drama, but with five drivers eligible to win the title in the season-ending race, France was thrilled.

Although some things didn't change — the guy who won the most races (Johnson, with eight victories) — still didn't win the title.

But in the end, Johnson had stopped criticizing the system after a year of pointing out its faults.

"This year has been one of the better years for competing for a championship," he said. "I look at that and I think that that is going to be good for the years to come. There are more positives than negatives."

"I think that in the end it will be better for everybody."

The points race was just one of the many major changes France ushered in.

He introduced Nextel as the new series sponsor after Winston ended its longtime partnership, and he settled a lawsuit seeking a second race for Texas Motor Speedway by shaking up the schedule.

France gave Texas a spring race by closing North Carolina Speedway, then continued to shift to the West by ending the Southern 500 at Darlington Raceway in favor of a second race in Phoenix.

France also lifted the liquor advertising ban, opening the door for companies like Crown Royal, whose logo will be displayed on Busch's car beginning next year.

He approved the green-white-checkered flag finish after fans nearly rioted at Talladega in April because Gordon was awarded the win for being in front of Earnhardt when a caution came out with three laps to go.



Dale Earnhardt Jr.'s season got off to a promising start with a victory in the Daytona 500, but his title hopes faded in the last few races.

When the fans littered the track with beer cans and other debris, France knew he had to allow racing to the finish.

But he also allowed a petty battle to brew through the summer over a bottle of PowerAde atop winners' cars. It was a conflicting sponsorship agreement between several drivers and NASCAR, and when the Gatorade-linked drivers refused to be photographed with the Coca-Cola associated blue PowerAde bottle, a battle of wills broke out.

Johnson, Gordon, Ryan Newman and Matt Kenseth won 12 of the first 22 races and all knocked the bottle off their cars. NASCAR told them to stop, then fined Johnson when he covered the bottle instead.

Gordon caused a flap a week later for never even driving to Victory Lane after his win in Indianapolis, a perceived intentional

avoidance of the PowerAde bottle.

By September, the oversized bottle seemed to shrink and wasn't so noticeable anymore in Victory Lane.

The changing of the guard also began, with Mark Martin and Rusty Wallace announcing that 2005 will be their final seasons, and Terry Labonte scaling back to 10 races next year.

It's the first of an expected wave of retirement, with 40-somethings Ricky Rudd, Dale Jarrett, Sterling Marlin and Kyle Petty also nearing the end.

But right behind them is a wave of youngsters, led by rookie of the year Casey Kahne, who finished second five times this season.

Busch Series champion Martin Truex Jr. and runner-up Kyle Busch will be full-time Cup drivers next season, filling seats no longer open to aging drivers.

NASCAR final driver standings

NEXTEL CUP SERIES			
1. Kurt Busch	6,506	6. Tony Stewart	6,326
2. Jimmie Johnson	6,498	7. Ryan Newman	6,180
3. Jeff Gordon	6,490	8. Matt Kenseth	6,069
4. Mark Martin	6,399	9. Elliott Sadler	6,024
5. Dale Earnhardt Jr.	6,368	10. Jeremy Mayfield	6,000

BUSCH SERIES			
1. Martin Truex Jr.	5,173	6. Jason Keller	4,088
2. Kyle Busch	4,943	7. David Green	4,082
3. Greg Biffle	4,564	8. Ashton Lewis Jr.	3,892
4. Ron Hornaday Jr.	4,258	9. Kenny Wallace	3,851
5. Mike Bliss	4,115	10. David Stremme	3,738

CRAFTSMAN TRUCK SERIES			
1. Bobby Hamilton	3,624	6. David Starr	3,298
2. Dennis Setzer	3,578	7. Jack Sprague	3,167
3. Ted Musgrave	3,554	8. Travis Kvapil	3,152
4. Carl Edwards	3,493	9. Steve Park	3,138
5. Matt Crafton	3,379	10. Chad Chaffin	3,122

NFL scoreboard

American Conference

East	W	L	Pct	PF	PA
New England	9	0	.900	241	171
N.Y. Jets	7	0	.700	212	165
Buffalo	4	6	.400	180	183
Miami	3	7	.300	140	210
South					
Indianapolis	10	0	.700	239	230
Jacksonville	6	4	.600	166	181
Philadelphia	6	0	.600	158	239
Tennessee	6	4	.600	186	212
North					
Pittsburgh	9	1	.900	240	161
Baltimore	7	0	.700	204	140
Cincinnati	4	6	.400	163	188
Cleveland	3	7	.300	177	208
West					
Denver	3	0	.700	233	167
San Diego	3	0	.700	235	190
Kansas City	3	0	.300	276	205
Oakland	3	7	.300	182	278

National Conference

East	W	L	Pct	PF	PA
Philadelphia	9	0	.900	266	158
N.Y. Giants	9	0	.900	188	172
Washington	7	0	.700	172	182
South					
Atlanta	2	8	.200	208	194
New Orleans	4	6	.400	211	288
Carolina	3	7	.300	142	182
North					
Green Bay	4	6	.600	256	230
Minnesota	4	6	.600	264	260
Chicago	4	6	.600	185	286
Detroit	4	6	.400	163	216
West					
Seattle	4	6	.600	230	254
San Francisco	4	6	.400	220	254
Arizona	4	6	.400	177	214
San Francisco	4	6	.400	175	296

Thursday's games

Chicago at Detroit	7:00
Tennessee at Pittsburgh	7:00
Washington at Houston	7:00
Philadelphia at N.Y. Giants	7:00
Cleveland at Cincinnati	7:00
San Diego at Kansas City	7:00
Tampa Bay at Carolina	7:00
Jacksonville at Minnesota	7:00
New Orleans at Atlanta	7:00
Buffalo at Seattle	7:00
N.Y. Jets at Arizona	7:00
Miami at San Francisco	7:00
Baltimore at New England	7:00
Oakland at Denver	7:00

Monday's game

St. Louis at Green Bay	7:00
Arizona at Detroit	7:00
Buffalo at Miami	7:00
Houston at N.Y. Jets	7:00
Minnesota at Indianapolis	7:00
Tennessee at Baltimore	7:00
San Francisco at St. Louis	7:00
Atlanta at Tampa Bay	7:00
Carolina at New Orleans	7:00
New England at Cleveland	7:00
Denver at San Diego	7:00
Kansas City at Oakland	7:00
N.Y. Giants at Washington	7:00
Green Bay at Philadelphia	7:00
Pittsburgh at Jacksonville	7:00

Monday, Dec. 6

Dallas at Seattle	7:00
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Falcons hunting for fourth banner

By PAUL NEWBERRY

The Associated Press

FLOWERY BRANCH, Ga. — Championships are a rarity around these parts.

The Atlanta Falcons have three banners hanging from the roof of the Georgia Dome — two for division titles, another for their lone NFC crown in 1998.

Barring a major collapse, they'll have to make room for another.

With six games to go, the Falcons (8-2) lead the NFC South by four games. They can clinch the division by beating New Orleans on Sunday and Tampa Bay the following week.

"We'd be lying if we told you we didn't look to see where we are. Sure, we look at it," defensive tackle Chad Lavalais said after practice Wednesday. "But we're not consumed by it. We know where we're at and how we got there."

The Falcons had been in the league 15 seasons when they won their first division title in 1980. Eighteen years passed before they claimed their second, a springboard to a Super Bowl appearance in franchise history.

Now, No. 3 is right in their grasp.

"It's winning the division is one of our goals," cornerback Kevin Mathis said. "But that's not our ultimate goal. Our ultimate goal is to be in the Super Bowl."

Coach Jim Mora, who has done a masterful job of reviving a team that went 5-11 last season, refuses to acknowledge the Falcons' comfortable position in the standings.

He hasn't talked about it with the players and doesn't see any need to bring it up.

"I don't believe there's anyone in this organization who feels like we've accomplished a dang thing," Mora said. "We have not assured ourselves a playoff berth. We have not wrapped up the division. We have not gotten ourselves a first-round bye. We have not gotten ourselves a home game. We have not gotten home-field advantage. All we've done is won enough games to be in first place with six to go."

Still, the Falcons have put themselves in an enviable position.

The schedule is favorable, with the next five games against teams with losing records — New Orleans (4-6), Tampa Bay (4-6), Oakland (3-7), Carolina (3-7) and New Orleans again. Atlanta closes the season at Seattle (6-4), but that could be a game that mainly determines playoff positioning.

The Saints are more focused on a wild-card bid than trying to catch the Falcons.

"There's an opportunity for us, but it's going to be tough," New Orleans quarterback Aaron Brooks said. "We would have to run the table and receive some help along the way."

With a solid hold on the division, the Falcons can work toward getting a first-round bye in the playoffs. They need to finish in the top two of the NFC, currently holding the second spot behind East-leading Philadelphia (9-1). No other team is within two games of Atlanta, the Falcons' last playoff appearance came two years ago, when they sneaked in as a wild card. They became the first team to win a postseason game at Green Bay's Lambeau Field, but lost the following week at Philadelphia.

With that in mind, tight end Alge Crumpler hopes the Falcons get to play at least one playoff game at the Georgia Dome. Two would be even better.

"I know how our crowds have been this season. If we can get some home games in the playoffs, just imagine what kind of excitement there would be," Crumpler said. "If anyone gets make sure it doesn't happen."

Crumpler also is aware of another little tidbit that might win them the division.

Since realignment, the NFC South has produced two straight conference champions — Tampa Bay in 2002 and Carolina last year.

"I've not really thought about this season in terms of our long-term history," Crumpler said. "But I know the last couple of years, our division winner has had great success getting to the big game. It seems like there's a major running through our division. We'd like to be part of it."



Bucs wide receiver Joe Jurevicius pulls in a touchdown pass last Sunday. The soft-spoken receiver is excited about his 3-month-old daughter and eager to help the Buccaneers turn their season around.

Jurevicius enjoying his second chances

By FRED GOODALL

The Associated Press

TAMPA, Fla. — Joe Jurevicius kneels in the end zone before each game, writes his late son's first initial in the turf and reminds himself how fortunate he is to have a second chance to be a father and a football player.

Tampa Bay's soft-spoken receiver is back after being sidelined nearly a year by injuries. He's excited about his 3-month-old daughter and eager to help the Buccaneers turn their season around.

"It's very gratifying. You realize how much you love this game when you're away from it," Jurevicius said.

"On one hand you realize you won't be able to play forever. On the other hand, you want to play as long as you can. When you have injury after injury, stemming from one injury, it plays with your mind."

An extremely private guy who briefly ended his life to the public when his son was born with a neurodegenerative disease during Tampa Bay's Super Bowl run two years ago, Jurevicius was poised to have a breakout season in 2003 before a torn knee ligament shut him down in the second game.

When he tried to come back too soon, he hurt the knee again and had surgery. Six months later, he developed a back problem that also required surgery and forced him to sit out the first six games of this season on the reserve/non-football injury list.

He never doubted he'd return and be a productive player again.

"The one thing I've learned is you've got to remain positive. Things don't always go your way," said Jurevicius, who adjusted the way he walked after knee surgery and is convinced that's what created his back problems.

"For whatever reason, I didn't have a roadblock. I had a building in my path. I had to be patient. I had to work around things and stay focused on what I wanted to do — and that was to get better and get on the field."

The Bucs (4-6) are 3-1 since he returned, and the 29-year-old is coming off a five-catch, two-touchdown performance in a 35-3 road win at San Francisco. The TDs were

his first since he scored two in last year's season opener at Philadelphia.

He celebrated one score against the 49ers by giving the ball to an Air Force captain standing behind the end zone. He did a little jig after the other TD, but kept the ball with plans with point it pink and give it to his daughter, Caroline, born during training camp.

"To me, my family is my priority. It's not football, family. It's family, football," Jurevicius said. "But I'd be lying if I said one didn't motivate the other."

The initials "MJW" are tattooed on the receiver's left biceps in memory of his late son, Michael William, who was born during the playoffs in January 2003. The infant died a few weeks after the Bucs beat Oakland in the Super Bowl.

Last Sunday, he felt his son was with him when he scored against the 49ers.

"I've got an angel upstairs," Jurevicius said. "Michael's my man. I always write the initial of his first name in the end zone before each game just so he can come for a ride with his dad."

The Bucs hope last Sunday's performance is a sign of things to come. A big, physical receiver with a knack for gaining yards after the catch, Jurevicius has 11 receptions for 149 yards in four games.

And he's excited about the prospect of being more involved in the offense down the stretch.

Jurevicius hurt his knee in a collision with teammate Mike Alstott, who injured his neck on the play and later had surgery for a herniated disk. The six-time Pro Bowl fullback got a close-up view of what the receiver went through to get back on the field for more than two months.

"A lot of guys would have quit," Alstott said.

But thoughts of his children were in his mind, Jurevicius said. "The receiver noted doctors originally told him and his wife that Michael would only live 72 hours. Instead, the infant battled his illness for more than two months."

"He never gave up. There are certain lessons to be learned from that," he said. "A lot of them, I'll never let out. A lot of things that happened are personal, and I'm going to keep them that way."

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Dolphins dismiss Williams

Team split on star's return

BY GREG BEACHAM
The Associated Press

SAN FRANCISCO — Just when the Miami Dolphins thought they were done talking about Ricky Williams, news of the wayward running back's imminent return to the NFL put him back in his former teammates' thoughts Wednesday.

And not all of them were happy to be thinking and talking about whether Ricky will run for the Dolphins again.

Even during a week away from South Florida, the Dolphins couldn't get away from the specter of Williams, who stunned the team with his abrupt retirement before training camp. His departure precipitated Miami's freefall into its first losing season in 16 years, leading to coach Dave Wannstedt's resignation two weeks ago.

Defensive end Jason Taylor was among Williams' harshest critics when the running back walked away. When asked how Williams might be welcomed back to Miami, Taylor essentially bit his tongue.

"I don't know. Everybody is different," Taylor said. "Everybody has different opinions of the situation. If it happens, then we'll deal with it then, but everyone's reaction is going to be different."

While the Dolphins (1-9) were holed up in a San Francisco hotel this week preparing for Sunday's game against the 49ers, Williams was taking holistic medicine classes at a school about 180 miles northeast of the Bay Area — and his lawyer was working out a deal to get Williams back in the league.

According to his lawyer, Williams hopes to move from the retired list to the suspended list Dec. 5, when he'll serve his four-game suspension for violating the league's substance-abuse rules.

After that, he would be under contract to Miami again — and the Dolphins would be forced to decide whether to welcome back a player who quit on them, or work out the best trade possible for a talented player with serious drawbacks to potential suitors.

Or release Williams.

Given the Dolphins' dismal season and non-existent running game, most of the players feel they're in no position to pass judgment on Williams — and not all of the Dolphins share Taylor's view.

"As a teammate, I'd welcome him," defensive end David Bowens said. "I'm cool with it. First, he owes an apology. It's about his teammates. But I'm always a forgiver. It's something that Rick and the guys upstairs. It's obviously going to be after the season."

The Dolphins never found an effective re-



Ricky Williams, leaving a college for holistic medicine in Grass Valley, Calif., will begin serving a four-game suspension on Dec. 5, clearing the way for his return in 2005.

placement for Williams, who rushed for 3,225 yards in two seasons with Miami.

Sammy Morris has started the past five games and is averaging 3.6 yards per carry, while Travis Minor is hobbled by the sprained ankle that sidelined him for five weeks. Morris missed the Dolphins' practice on Wednesday with a rib injury.

Three players back up Claret's claims

The Associated Press

Three former Ohio State football players backed up some of Maurice Claret's allegations that players received improper benefits while on the team, ESPN.com reported Wednesday night.

Caroline Panthers wide receiver Drew Carter, former OSU linebacker Fred Pagac Jr. and former Buckeyes fullback Jack Tucker said in a letter posted on the Web site that they knew of tutors who completed homework for players. Carter said he was overpaid for working odd jobs.

Ohio State athletic director Andy Geisler and sports information director Steve Snapp did not immediately return messages left by The Associated Press late Wednesday night.

But Snapp told ESPN.com he thought the story was "another example of selective journalism on (ESPN's) part and an attempt to run an unbalanced story."

Pagac's father, Fred Sr., was an assistant coach at Ohio State for 19 years. Tucker was an Academic All-Big Ten pick.

"There are always people who will help you and cross the line," Pagac was quoted as saying in the report. "I've personally seen it happen. You had tutors who if you asked them for help writing a paper they'd end up writing it. You'd go in and ask about specifics, and then it would end up getting written."

Carter told ESPN.com that he "got paid quite a bit of money for sweeping, cleaning up stuff, doing like very, very light work."

In an interview with ESPN The Magazine earlier this month, Claret accused coach Tim Tressel, his staff and school boosters of arranging for him to get passing grades, cars, and thousands of dollars, including for bogus summer jobs.

The school denied the claims, and some former players told ESPN they never saw any wrongdoing in the Ohio State program. Carter, Pagac and Tucker told ESPN.com they didn't believe Tressel set up Claret with vehicles.

Claret led Ohio State to a national championship in 2002 as a player, but he had played football since he was suspended for lying to investigators during an NCAA probe of allegations that he received improper benefits from a family friend.

49ers' Erickson says his job is secure

From wire reports

SANTA CLARA, Calif. — With a 1-9 record and persistent rumors about his job security, San Francisco 49ers coach Dennis Erickson said Wednesday that team management has assured him his job is safe for 2005.

When asked if he had been told he'd be back next year, Erickson said: "Oh, yeah. I mean there's no question about that. Like I've said, we have a long-term plan and we go ahead and go from there."

But he immediately added: "People can change their mind, you know that. A lot of people change their minds."

Heading into Sunday's home game against the Miami Dolphins, Erickson is 18-18 since getting a five-year, \$12.5 million contract before the 2003 season. His NFL record is 39-51 (.433), including a four-year stint with the Seattle Seahawks.

The 49ers' struggles this year have much to do with the team's overhauled roster. General Manager Jerry Donahue bid farewell to several veterans last offseason as part of the team's plan to handle the salary cap and, with that in mind, Erickson's bosses have determined the coach is not to blame for what could be the worst 49ers season in history.

Owner John York, through spokesman Sam Singer, confirmed Erickson's version of his job status.

"That's correct. There have been zero discussions otherwise," Singer said.

During the weekend, reports resurfaced linking Erickson to the vacancy at the University of Washington. Quoting an anonymous source, profootballtalk.com

said Erickson was headed for Washington and that the only question was whether he would finish the season or leave early to get a head start on recruiting for the Huskies.

Erickson has vehemently denied interest in the Washington opening, saying, "I'm going to finish this thing and do what I came to do."

A spokesman from the University of Washington said that the school would not comment on its coaching vacancy.

Leftwich will start vs. Vikings

JACKSONVILLE, Fla. — Byron Leftwich got the go-ahead Wednesday from coach Jack Del Rio to make his first start in three weeks when the Jaguars play at Minnesota on Sunday.

Leftwich has missed the past two games with a knee injury.

"It was able to work all pads and moved around pretty well," Del Rio said following Wednesday's workout. "He threw the ball accurately and made good decisions. He basically picked up where he left off a little bit, so we're glad to see that."

Holcomb gets nod for Browns

BEREA, Ohio — Cleveland Browns quarterback Kelly Holcomb will get his first start of the season Sunday against the Cincinnati Bengals, and injured J.E. Garcia will be, at best, third on the depth chart.

"By Sunday, he should be available to be a third," Browns coach Butch Davis said of Garcia. "A lot will depend on how he responds to treatment."

Davis said he didn't consider going with rookie Luke McCown and that he prefers to bring him along slowly.

Garcia is listed as questionable with a strained right rotator cuff suffered during Sunday's loss to

NFL injury update

Injuries to prominent NFL players, followed by team's prognosis. (See Page 24 for complete injury report provided by the league.)

Ravens RB Jamal Lewis (sprained ankle) out for Sunday.

Packers LB Mike Barrow (knee) out for season.

Giants QB Matt Hasselbeck (leg) questionable.

Chargers WR Placido Bucaris (hamstring) out for Sunday.

Titans RB Chris Brown (toe) questionable.

the New York Jets and was unable to practice Wednesday. Garcia said his shoulder is too weak and sore to throw.

"Whether I play on Sunday is fully a question mark right now," Garcia said. "I have sprained and strained some of the ligaments and muscles around the joint in my right shoulder. It has basically caused a weakening effect and until those muscles and ligaments strengthen and tighten up, it's just one of those things where the strength is not even near 100 percent."

Raiders WR Porter intends to test free-agent market

ALAMEDA, Calif. — With his team almost certain to miss the playoffs for a second straight year and with plans to opt out of his contract at the end of the season, Oakland Raiders wide receiver Jerry Porter intends to get in the marketing business.

"His product? Himself." "Every game is a free-agent audition for me," said Porter, who leads the Raiders (3-7) in receptions and yardage this season. "I mean, I'm trying to go out and put the best product I can put out there on the field."

A second-round draft choice in 2000, Porter spent his first four years in the NFL as a well-paid underdog to Tim Brown and Jerry Rice. But when Brown was released in the offseason and

Rice was sent packing to Seattle during a midseason trade, the door was open for Porter to assume the No. 1 spot.

He has done that to a certain extent with 38 receptions for 523 yards and one touchdown. At that pace, Porter will finish with career-high marks for catches and yardage.

Dolphins LB Thomas doubtful; QB Feeley plans to play

SAN FRANCISCO — Miami Dolphins linebacker Zach Thomas is doubtful for their upcoming game against the 49ers after missing practice Wednesday with a hamstring injury.

Thomas, a five-time Pro Bowl selection, leads Miami with 131 tackles. He has made at least 11 tackles in every game.

Quarterback A.J. Feeley, who played through a painful injury to his back and buttocks last week in Seattle, is listed as questionable, but plans to play with the help of pain-blocking injections.

Sage Rosenfels is the backup, and the Dolphins signed veteran Jason Garrett on Wednesday.

"I'm surprised how well it went," Feeley said after Wednesday's practice. "It all worked out right. Everything was crisp. There's no question about (starting Sunday). ... I feel really happy for (Fiedler). There's no one on this team who has more respect for him than I do."

Jets GM gets extension

HEMPSTAD, N.Y. — New York Jets General Manager Terry Bradway received a two-year contract extension Thursday that will keep him in the organization through 2007.

Bradway was unavailable for comment Thursday but released a statement in which he said, "We have laid a foundation here we believe will be successful for years to come."

Renegated Heels win Maui Invitational

The Associated Press

LAHAINA, Hawaii — Raymond Felton did everything to get North Carolina another Maui Invitational championship.

The junior point guard ran the offense as he always does, defended the opponent's best backcourt player as he always does and even threw in a couple of highlight-reel plays, including the 11th-ranked Tar Heels' 106-92 victory over Iowa on Wednesday night.

Oh, and he did it all one day after his hurting his left wrist.

"I was in pain the whole time, but I just forgot about it," Felton said. "I love my teammates to death, the coaching staff, Coach Williams. I'll always give them 100 percent."

It was the fourth Maui Invitational title game in as many appearances for the Tar Heels (3-1) and they headed back to the mainland with a second championship trophy. And even though Rashad McCants had 22 points, Felton was the main reason, so he was selected the tournament MVP.

His stats weren't overly impressive — 13 points, nine assists, five



rebounds and four steals — but it was the defensive job he did on Iowa's Jeff Hornacek that set the tone for the Tar Heels.

"We talked about how Hornacek is the key to their whole team because he shoots with such range he spreads your defense," said Heels coach Roy Williams. "Whoever is guarding him has to keep him in front of them but be close enough to do something. Raymond is our best on-the-ball defender and his play was important to us on both ends of the court. He established the tempo on the offensive end and he's difficult to dribble penetrate against on the defensive end."

Hornacek averaged 22.5 points in the first two games for the Hawkeyes (3-1), shooting 22-for-40 from the field. Felton, playing with a bandage on his left wrist, just wouldn't let Hornacek beat the ball where he wanted it.

Hornacek took just four shots in the first half and made two, and

had six points as North Carolina shot a 59-40 lead. The Tar Heels shot 58 percent in the first half, closing the opening 20 minutes by making 11 of their last 14 shots.

No. 1 Wake Forest 79, Providence 67: At New York, Justin Gray needed six stitches in his right eyebrow after taking an elbow to the face, but came back and finished with 21 points for Wake Forest in the semifinals of the Preseason NIT at Madison Square Garden.

The Demon Deacons (4-0) survived some hot shooting by Providence's Ryan Gomes to advance to the championship game Friday night against Arizona.

Gomes led Providence (3-1) with 24 points and Dwight Brington added 23.

No. 5 Illinois 85, Oakland, Mich. 54: At Champaign, Ill. Luther Head scored Illinois' first seven points and finished with 22 to lead the Illini (3-0).

Deron Williams added 17 points and had nine assists for Illinois (3-0).

No. 12 Louisville 92, Stanford 67: At Lahaina, Hawaii, Taquan Dean scored 30 points and Louis-

ville (3-1) beat Stanford in the fifth-place game of the Maui Invitational.

Rob Little had 19 points for Stanford (2-2).

No. 15 Texas 95, Tennessee 70: At Lahaina, Hawaii, freshman guard Daniel Gibson scored 19 points, leading the Longhorns (3-1) over the Volunteers (1-2) in the third-place game of the Maui Invitational.

No. 18 Arizona 61, Michigan 60 (OT): At New York, Hall of Fame coach Luke Olson pushed his Madison Square Garden winning streak to 11 games with Arizona's victory.

In the extra period, Chris Hunter gave Michigan the lead, but Arizona (3-1) battled back, tying it on two free throws by Channing Frye and then moving ahead on a foul shot by Mustafa Shakur and a basket by Javawn McClellan.

Michigan (3-1) got into it again on free throws by Dion Harris, Daniel Horton and Hunter. The Wolverines had the ball and a chance to win, but Horton's shot missed.

No. 16 Pittsburgh 83, Robert Morris 59: At Pittsburgh, Chris

Taft and Chevon Troutman led a 16-0 run during the final six minutes of the first half to help Pittsburgh (2-0) beat city rival Robert Morris (1-3).

Taft finished with 21 points and nine rebounds and point guard Carl Krauser had 18 points. Pittsburgh won its 42nd in a row at home against non-conference opponents and improved to 24-0 against Robert Morris.

No. 19 Alabama 90, Alaska-Anchorage 55: At Anchorage, Alaska, Jermario Davidson scored 15 of his 17 points in the first half, leading Alabama (3-0) to a rout of Division II Alaska-Anchorage (1-2) in the first round of the Great Alaska Shootout.

Davidson added 13 rebounds for Alabama and Earnest Shelton had 18 points.

No. 24 Gonzaga 88, Idaho 74: At Spokane, Wash., senior Ronny Turiaf scored a career-high 40 points and grabbed 11 rebounds, leading Gonzaga (3-0) past Idaho (0-4).

Turiaf became the first Gonzaga player since Jim McPhee in 1990 to score 40 in a game. Dan-drick Jones led Idaho with 23 points.

Fight over suspensions could affect labor deal

By CHRIS SHERIDAN

The Associated Press

NEW YORK — One of the byproducts of last week's NBA brawl could be a poisoned atmosphere in collective bargaining talks.

At a time when they should be negotiating a new labor agreement, lawyers for the NBA and the players' union are about to fight a side battle — an appeal of the lengthy suspensions given to Ron Artest, Stephen Jackson and Jermaine O'Neal — that could exacerbate an already contentious relationship.

Just six years ago, the league and union went through a lengthy lockout that forced cancellation of nearly half of the 1998-99 season.

That was a low point, and nearly all the principle players from that battle — starting with NBA commissioner David Stern and union director Billy Hunter and including most of the staff lawyers — still hold the same jobs.

"This is a relationship that's dysfunctional at best. The well is already so poisoned, it would be difficult to poison it even more."

Robert Lanza
Labor attorney

Preliminary arbitrator to resolve salary cap-related disputes, has been vacant since Kenneth Dam left in 2001, because the sides haven't agreed on a replacement.

Neither side wants a repeat of the battle

handed out to Artest (the rest of the season), Jackson (30 games) and O'Neal (25 games) for brawling with fans at Friday night's Pacers-Detroit Pistons game.

Sole discretion in deciding punishment for behavior on the court rests with the commissioner, who also is the only avenue of appeal.

The union wants to maneuver around that rule, which is in the collective bargaining agreement, by trying to send the case to an arbitrator, Roger Kaplan, who was relieved of his duties two months ago when the owners declined to renew his term.

The league and the union have not agreed on a replacement for Kaplan, the emergency grievance arbitrator until his successor is named. "I don't know what involvement, if any, I'll have with his case," Kaplan said Wednesday, declining further comment.

If recent history provides a guide, Kaplan could be the emergency arbitrator for quite some time. The post of systems arbitrator to resolve salary cap-related disputes, has been vacant since Kenneth Dam left in 2001, because the sides haven't agreed on a replacement.

Neither side wants a repeat of the battle



The Indiana Pacers' Ron Artest is restrained by teammate Austin Croshere on Nov. 19 following a brawl in Auburn Hills, Mich. Lawyers who should be negotiating the NBA's new labor agreement could be tied up fighting the suspensions of Artest and his teammates.

waged six years ago, but there is a growing concern among players that another lockout could be coming.

"I feel it's inevitable," Toronto's Jalen Rose said earlier this season.

Absent some sort of conciliatory gesture from Stern, the relationship between the league and union in the weeks and months ahead figures to remain adversarial at best.

People close to Stern and Hunter say there is some uneasiness between the two

men, and the union's decision to fight the suspensions doesn't figure to strengthen the relationship. Neither side entirely trusts the other, and no gestures of compromise were made as the unprecedented events of the past week unfolded.

"We can still do both. We can litigate the suspensions and negotiate the CBA. One issue should not impact the other," Hunter said.

Stern, through a spokesman, declined comment.

SPORTS



James sends post-Olympic message to Brown with 43 points vs. Pistons, Page 30



Phil Mickelson celebrates a birdie putt on the 16th green during the final round of the PGA Grand Slam of Golf in Poipu Beach, Hawaii, on Wednesday. Mickelson shot 59, matching the low score in competitive golf, but the score will not count in the PGA Tour's records because the tournament is not an official event.

59

Mickelson matches record in a PGA Tour exhibition

BY JAYMES SONG
The Associated Press

POIPU BEACH, Hawaii — Phil Mickelson turned his opponents into fans in the PGA Grand Slam of Golf.

And ran away from them, too, with a freewheeling 13-under 59. "It was incredible," top-ranked Vijay Singh said. "After about the 12th or 15th hole, we were just watching him."

Coming off a two-week break from golf, Mickelson capped his breakthrough season with a five-stroke victory and \$400,000 payday Wednesday in the two-day exhibition event for the four major winners.

"When I force it at the majors or at other tournaments, I'm not going to get the best score," the Masters champion said. "When I kind of freewheel it, let my game just kind of take care of itself, the ball seems to find the hole."

Lefty had an eagle and 11 birdies in his bogey-free final round, and putted just 24 times — 11 en route to a tournament-record 28 on the front nine. He finished at 17-under 127 to match the tournament record on the oceanside Poipu Bay course.

"It was certainly unexpected," he said. "I didn't hit it great today and somehow I shot 59. So go figure. It just all kind of came together."

"I just went out and just kind of played and today, the ball went in the hole. I don't really have an explanation for it."

Mickelson even had a chance for a 58, but barely missed a 9-foot eagle putt on the final hole. He tapped in for a birdie and smiled as the gallery cheered wildly.

"To me, there's not much difference between a 58 and 59," he

said. "There's a huge difference between 59 and 60. So the last putt, I didn't really feel that much pressure because I really didn't have to make it. I just wanted to make sure I two-putted."

Mickelson's score will not count in the PGA Tour's records because the Grand Slam is not an official tournament. Al Geiberger, Chip Beck and David Duval are the only players to shoot 59 in official PGA Tour events, Annika Sorenstam did it on the LPGA Tour, and Shigeki Maruyama had a 58 in qualifying for the 2000 U.S. Open.

Singh, a nine-time winner on the PGA Tour this year, shot 66 to finish second. U.S. Open winner Retief Goosen closed with a 68 for an 11-under total, and British Open champion Todd Hamilton was last at 1-over after a 75.

"Phil's round was pretty spectacular," Hamilton said. "I don't think I've ever seen a guy hole so many putts."

Mickelson's previous competitive career low was 61 in the 2001 Greater Hartford Open. His season low was 63 in the Bob Hope Chrysler Classic.

In balmy and calm conditions Wednesday, Mickelson struggled off the tee — finding the rough, sand and gallery — but he compensated with masterful putting.

"I didn't really feel sharp off the tee," he said. "When I got on the green, boy, I was just able to see the line and get the ball to go in, which in all honesty has never happened to me on Bermuda greens."

The first-time major champion can't wait to return to Kauai.

"That's the goal," he said. "We all want to get back here because it means we've won a major. That's what we're all shooting for."

**No. 11
Tar Heels take
Maui Classic
title with win
over Iowa**

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**Texas plays
key role
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